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CHRISTIAN COURIER
Reformed Weekly

52nd Year of Pu... January 31, 1997 No. 2518

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CHRISTIAN COURIER
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'Parish nursing' programs help Christians play stronger role in healthcare

Alan Doerksen

OSHAWA, Ont. and EDMONTON — As governments in Alberta and Ontario make reforms and cutbacks to healthcare services, some Christians in both provinces are taking a more active role in the healthcare system by training and hiring "parish nurses."

At the University of Alberta, two professors in the nursing faculty have started Canada's first university training program for parish nurses. Dr. Joanne Olson and Dr. Jane Simington started the program last May. The program has two parts: an intensive one month theory course and an internship.

The training program "mainly grew out of an interest in the community," says Olson. Local churches wanted to extend their healing ministries and wanted proper education for healthcare volunteers, so they contacted her.

The program is also partly a response to healthcare reforms happening in Alberta, says Olson. "When healthcare reform happens, government is looking at community and looking for more community-based providers."

Reinstating the spiritual dimension

"Nursing has always looked at people as whole: body, mind and spirit," she says. But in modern medicine, the spiritual side of people is often neglected. "The churches should be a very vital link in the healthcare system," asserts Olson. "I see that as a role that helps to meet some of the spiritual needs."

Last May, 39 students took the theory course titled "Promoting well-being in faith communities." The students were from across Canada and represented at least five denominations. "The main ones were Lutheran, Catholic, United, Anglican and Baptist," reports Olson, who attends the United Church.

COURTESY DR. JOANNE OLSON

Dr. Jane Simington (left) and Dr. Joanne Olson, who began the parish nursing program at the University of Alberta.

Olson taught the theory course with Simington and two pastoral care workers: Margaret Clark, who is co-ordinator of pastoral care at the University of Alberta Hospital, and Rev. Hal Paulson, who teaches clinical pastoral education at several hospitals in the Edmonton area.

The course's four units deal with:

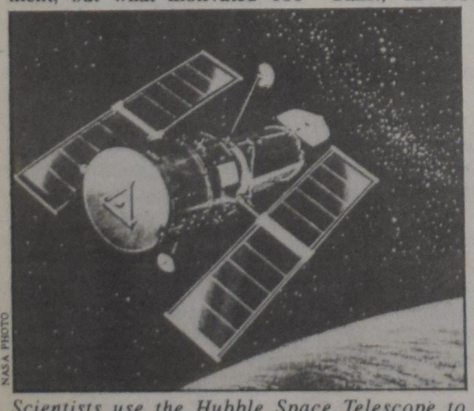
- health, healing and wholeness;
- the nurse as a healer and the "therapeutic use of self," in terms of counselling and interviewing skills;
- the various transitions of life, such as death, illness and loss of a job, and how to help people deal with these;
- the practical side of parish nursing work (such as professional issues related to it).

See **CHURCHES** *page 2...*

Intelligent-design group challenges Darwinists with evidence

Bert Witvoet

Call it a group, call it a movement, but what motivated 160 academics who gathered at Biola University in La Mirada, Calif., in November was to debunk the materialist notions built into contemporary science and to show empirically that a study of the universe reveals design and a designer.



NASA PHOTO

Scientists use the Hubble Space Telescope to probe the origin of the universe (see editorial).

The group believes that Darwinian theories of chance formation of the cosmos do not do justice to the high degree of complexity found in the basic building blocks of the universe.

The term bandied about by the group is "irreducible complexity," which, according to Calvin College professor of philosophy Del Ratzsch, who spoke at the Biola conference, means that an organism can show interaction between a number of sub-components which have no function outside the system and the system cannot work without them. All the components would have to come about at the same time, which flies in the face of gradual evolutionism first proposed by Darwin.

Called informally the "intelligent-design" movement (website:http://www.arn.org/arn), its proponents are mostly Christians with PhDs from respectable universities whose research stands up to the highest scrutiny, says Ratzsch. As such, not too many young-earth creationists, who take a literal approach to the Genesis account, are comfortable in the movement because their scientific work does not measure up.

The claim that there is nothing illegitimate in bringing considerations of design and a designer into a study of the origin of the cosmos is based on empirical evidence, says Ratzsch. He makes mention especially of Michael Behe, a Catholic biochemist who wrote the book *Darwin's Black Box*.

Ratzsch considers himself a

See **GROUP** *page 3...*

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Churches reclaim 'traditional role' in healthcare

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At present, 13 of the program's first students are involved with nine-month internships with churches in Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary. The students spend at least one day a week with their assigned church and work with staff or lay leaders. Sometimes the students act as a link with local hospitals and community health centres. One result of the program is that some of the churches involved have decided to hire parish nurses in the future, says Olson.

Reclaiming church's role

In Oshawa, Ont., members of several churches have decided to reclaim what they see as the church's traditional role in healthcare by starting Interchurch Health Ministries of Durham (the region that includes Oshawa). This ministry also involves training parish nurses and placing them with local congregations.

Spearheading this ministry is Rev. Henry Fischer, a retired Lutheran pastor who is also president of the Lutheran Health Care Association of Canada. It started in 1994 when Fischer and others first became aware of parish nursing. In the U.S., parish nurses have been working for 15 years, he says. Lutheran General Hospital in Chicago runs the International Parish Resource Center which trains parish nurses there.

Fischer and his colleagues have developed their own training program for parish nurses. Fischer works with a board of directors and a committee that represents many denominations, including United, Christian Reformed, Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian.

COURTESY REV. HENRY FISCHER

The five parish nurses working at churches in the Oshawa area.

In the spring of 1995, Interchurch Health Ministries started a pilot project with five churches. First a "health cabinet" of interested people was formed in each church; then last January each church commissioned a parish nurse. All the nurses began working as volunteers, says Fischer, but "the ideal thing is a full-time paid position... The congregation has to catch a vision of the healing ministry of the church."

The five churches chosen for the pilot project include three United, one Anglican and one Lutheran church, each having a different type of congregation, including one that is rural, one downtown church with an aging congregation, and one suburban church with "yuppies," explains Fischer.

Focus on health education

The parish nurse's function is to be "an educator, a health promoter," explains Fischer. "The nurse does not do hands-on nursing." At their churches, the nurses can organize educational events and start support groups. "One of our nurses is leading a Bible study for people with depression." The nurses can also provide information and referral services. Another role they play is "faith and health counsellor" and facilitator of volunteers. The nurses also visit people in hospitals and their homes.

Fischer points out that ideally the nurses should serve not only their church but its surrounding area, as a form of outreach. "'Parish' means a geographical area to do mission in."

Fischer meets regularly with the interning nurses to discuss theological and practical issues affecting their work. "We do a lot of sharing," he says. He and the nurses pray regularly for each other and also read the same Bible passages each day.

The pilot project has caused some changes in the churches involved, reports Fischer. All five now have intercessory prayer groups and three have healing services. Two of the churches are planning to pay their nurses on a part-time basis.

This year, six to 10 new congregations will be joining the program, says Fischer. But he has been getting inquiries about the program from "all over the place" and hopes it will expand across the country.

Catholic hospitals facing closure in Ontario

Alan Doerksen (with files from the *Catholic Register*)

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — As the Ontario government considers how to restructure the province's healthcare system, many hospitals, including several run by Catholics, are facing program cutbacks or even closure. But some of these hospitals are challenging the government and rallying public support in order to stay open.

The Ontario government's Health Services Restructuring Commission (HSRC) is part way through a four-year mandate of making recommendations on how to change the province's healthcare system, and is looking primarily at how to "downsize" the present hospital system.

Late last year, the commission recommended that Sudbury should consolidate its three hospitals into one. Staff and supporters of Sudbury General — which is Catholic-run, has a staff of 1,000 and is the region's oldest hospital — have protested this move. The Sisters of St. Joseph, a provincial group that runs Sudbury General, has taken the province to court in order to keep the hospital open. The court case is still in progress, reports Ronald Marr, executive director of the Catholic Health Association of Ontario (CHAO).

The commission's recommendation rejects a proposal from the local district health council that the hospital and one other in Sudbury remain open. Some supporters of Sudbury General feel betrayed by Ontario Health Minister Jim Wilson, who assured CHAO at a meeting last September that Catholic healthcare would be recognized.

Deborah Dunn, community relations spokesperson for the General, says the commission's decision "breaks promises and commitments" made by Wilson and Premier Mike Harris.

Tremendous support

In Hamilton, a local district health council recommended early last year that St. Joseph's Hospital there be shut down. But when the council held public consultations, local people showed "immense support" for St. Joseph's, says Marr. St. Joseph's and other hospitals in the city came up with an alternative plan that would keep the hospital open and downsize the city's Henderson Hospital instead. The district council has accepted this suggestion. This was partly due to "a tremendous write-in campaign" by supporters of the St. Joseph's, says Hugh Greenwood, the hospital's director of public relations. But the staff of St. Joseph's is still awaiting a report from the provincial commission about the future of the hospital.

Other communities in Ontario are also waiting for recommendations from the commission. In the Niagara region, a local restructuring committee has suggested that the Hotel Dieu, a 223-bed regional Catholic hospital, be closed and its services be consolidated with the other local hospital, St. Catharines General. But the Hotel Dieu wants to generate public support through a series of public meetings this month. An alternative is to take the case to the provincial commission.

"We're going to try to turn around the recommendations," says Denise Papaiz, community relations manager for Hotel Dieu.

But not all Catholic hospitals are facing closure or cutbacks. Patrick Meagher, managing editor of the *Catholic Register*, says the provincial commission has recommended that St. Michael's Hospital, in downtown Toronto, take over some work from nearby Wellesley Hospital.

Marr suggests the Ontario government is not targeting Catholic hospitals specifically for closure. But because they often operate in cities with more than one hospital, they are vulnerable to the cutbacks.

"To its credit, the restructuring commission has not taken a cookie-cutter approach to the rationalizations," says Marr. "It's dealing with each community in a unique way."

Marr suggests that supporters of Catholic hospitals should write to district health councils and attend public consultations to express their views.

Greenwood, too, says supporters should speak up about their concerns. Ontario's Catholic hospitals have a different approach from other hospitals, he says. One distinctive of Catholic hospitals is "the mission statements and the values of the owners" and another is the staff's "caring, compassionate, people-oriented approach." The staff are not only Catholic but represent "a wide range of denominations."

For our calendar of events, please turn to page 19.

Thanks for giving thanks

CHATHAM, Ont. — Although the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands was observed two years ago, the Canadian Legion in Chatham and Kent County decided to present the Dutch-Canadian community with a Friendship Award and certificates and medals to members of the Thank You Canada Committee. The Friendship Award and Certificate are now proudly on display in the South Chatham Village Retirement Residence. The Thank You Canada Committee, on the other hand, had placed a memorial wall in the Legion Gardens in Chatham as a lasting remembrance two years ago.

Group sees design in universe

.. continued from page 1

friendly gadfly in the movement. "I am not yet as convinced as some of them are of all the claims made by the movement, he says, "but I do think that there is potential for tremendously important contributions." Ratzsch thinks that some deep background work still needs to be done.

He sees the group as making good headway in a two-pronged manner: It is demonstrating convincingly that materialistic thinking has been built into contemporary science. "We have to make science more philosophy-free," he says. "Phillip Johnson did important work in this area in his *Darwin on Trial*.

The second prong is the group's ability to demonstrate that there is nothing in principle wrong with bringing the idea of design into a study of the origin of the cosmos.

How can this be empirically demonstrated? Ratzsch uses an illustration. "Suppose you landed on some planet never before visited by humans and you found a perfectly cubical chunk of chemically pure titanium. You would immediately conclude that some being, some space creature, had deposited that there. That would be a perfectly rational conclusion."

In the same way, one does not have to start with a presupposition of design to conclude that the universe was shaped by a designer, says Ratzsch.

A variety of Christians

Although he does not know of any Muslims being part of the group, Ratzsch thinks that Muslims could belong to the intelligent design movement. At the same time, he explains that the Biola conference opened and closed with Christian worship.

Some members accept the Big Bang theory, a common ancestry for all creatures and think that a 14 to 16 billion-year-old earth fits very nicely with Scripture, says Ratzsch. On the other hand, some others in the group adhere to a much younger earth.

The core convictions which hold the group together are that there is a design and that one can make a scientific case for this theory.

Ratzsch is quite excited about the intelligent-design movement and believes that it will be important in the long run for the Christian community. It alerts people to the fact that much of what is presented as pure science has materialism and naturalism built into it.

A high view of science has led to a low view of God, says Ratzsch. Referring to C.S. Lewis' *Till We Have Faces*, he says, "Sometimes we throw sand in our own eyes and then we complain bitterly that we can't see."

Pedagogeries

Alyce Oosterhuis

Straight rows

When Calvin Christian School started in 1952, the classrooms were furnished with whatever desks could be acquired cheaply. In my memory I see four-in-a-row-desks bolted to wooden slats, lined up behind and beside each other to form a double row of 16 students line up neatly to face the teacher at the front.

From the student's perspective, this desk arrangement had certain advantages; passing notes was easy, as was candy, gum or other forbidden treasures; hiding behind the head of the person sitting in front of you made it possible to avoid the teacher's gaze and attention; copying each other's work meant you only had to do half the work. There were also disadvantages: sharing such close space with the class "undesirables" often resulted in playground teasing; tuning out distractions was difficult when one really wanted to learn something; body odors were difficult to avoid. (Is that why classroom farting was so severely punished?)

Straight rows are 'Christian'?

What triggered these '50s memories was a colleague's phone conversation with a Christian school principal last week. This principal wanted to be assured that we were educating our B.Ed. students with the "straight row paradigm" as the most desirable for Christian classrooms. Straight rows are neat, orderly, uniform, efficient, and they should always point to the authoritative front where the teacher controls.

Straight rows minimize discipline difficulties, encourage rule-following behavior and enable the teacher to oversee the whole of the class in a glance. When the teacher demands attention, straight rows allow him or her to recognize immediately where there are distractions, disturbances or disobedience. Tolerate any deviation from the straight rows and one will soon find disorder, chaos and lowered achievement levels.

Strange how rigidly we can embrace a custom, a method or a paradigm and "baptize" it with the adjective "Christian" to advance our own particular views of how teaching "ought" to be in the Kingdom. The "straight row" model was necessitated in Calvin Christian because we could not afford to buy new desks and had to contend ourselves with the discards of the "factory model" years in eduction when schools processed students as efficiently as possible. There was nothing particularly Christian about having straight rows; what was Christian was to be stewardly about our resources and to keep tuition affordable for the greatest number.

Get rid of stereotypes

I've also heard student centres and reading corners in the classroom described as being a more "Christian" approach to teaching than alternatives. I do not think there is anything more inherently "Christian" in these classroom models than in straight rows. I have seen reading corners where students have been cramped into such an uncomfortable space that reading must have seemed a chore. I have witnessed "learning centres" where students were actively engaged and where students were fooling around. Was the one learning centre more Christian than the other?

It is time we stepped away from the polarization of approaches in teaching and the insistence that the one is more Christian than the other: straight rows versus desk groupings; whole language versus structured and distinct skill training; whole class teaching versus individualized instruction, etc. What makes a classroom a Christian classroom is the belief that Christ is right there beside you at your desk; that the Holy Spirit is enabled to work in children's hearts; that the focus of learning is God's working in our midst, as he has been doing since the beginning of time.

Those learnings and teachings can be conveyed in straight rows and student centres, in whole language and in basal readers, in a whole-class lesson and one-on-one interactions. To limit God to one approach or one method is probably very un-Christian.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Editorial

As the universe gets bigger, does God get smaller?

My wife and I took a trip to outer space the other day, and it cost us $8.50 a piece. We accomplished that feat by watching a slide show of pictures taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. One thing we learned from the experience was that we on earth are as much in outer space as the farthest galaxy. There is no centre to the universe. We learned from Galileo that this is not an earth-centred universe. Now we know that it isn't even a sun-oriented place. We, too, are in outer space. So we could have saved $8.50 each.

Still, the trip was worth it. Never before have humans been able to visually penetrate as far into the universe as we are now able via Hubble. What through the best telescope on earth looks like a fuzzy star, through the lens of Hubble becomes a galaxy with thousands of pinprick stars.

The farther one peers into the universe, the longer the light has taken to travel our way. By seeing the furthest galaxy, we had come nearly to the beginning of the universe, we learned. How far away in time is that? The age of the universe is around 14 billion years, we were told. So by seeing this far galaxy we were looking at light that left its source perhaps 12 billion years ago.

Space vacuum cleaners

The whole concept is, of course, based on the Big Bang theory. According to this postulate, an explosion occurred 14 billion years ago, causing everything to expand, including space. A few billion years later, most of the stars were born in what the slide presenter called the universe's baby boom. Today new stars are still being formed, but not in the quantity of earlier ages. Stars are also dying. And the universe is still expanding. And space is getting bigger.

We also learned about black holes, which a report in the *Globe and Mail* described as "those much ballyhooed vacuum cleaners of outer space" that gobble up other stars and even light. The reasoning goes, based on Einstein's theory of general relativity, that when any mass becomes too compact, it collapses under the weight of its own gravity into a single, dimensionless point. Heavy stuff. Demonstrate that, if you please. It is believed that every galaxy has a black hole.

I noticed that in the back row of the theatre we had our own black hole. A man, who had also paid $8.50 to see the show slept through the whole thing, snoring at times and sucking up the sound coming from the speaker.

Can you count the stars?

And do you know how many galaxies there are? If you hold up your thumb with arm outstretched, the space of your thumb covers a million galaxies. If you hold up a pinhead that way, it covers 3,000 galaxies. We are talking galaxies, folks, not planets and stars, but groupings of stars. And a galaxy may contain millions or billions of stars. This is incredible stuff. It makes your head spin!

It also made me think of something I had been reading for devotions lately. When God said to Abraham that he would make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, he wasn't asking Abraham to look through the Hubble. No way will humanity, let alone Abraham's seed, ever reach the number of stars that this 12-ton spacecraft telescope is photographing from day to day. God was talking naked-eye stuff. And, of course, he was talking hyperbole, because humanity will never become as numerous as the sand on the seashore either.

So many thoughts

But back to the slide show.

It was a marvelous showing of only small sections of the universe. Nevertheless, it touches one deeply. How vast the universe is and how small and insignificant we are on this little planet called Earth! It even made me think that there might be other planets somewhere in the universe with life of some sort. And why not? The Bible does not forbid us to think that way. Nowhere does it say that God created only one planet with life and that the whole purpose of the creation of this vast universe is the weal and woe of the inhabitants of this earth.

There were so many questions turning around in my head. Are the scientists right in saying that the universe is 14 billion years old? They may be right, but they may be wrong, too. Again, unless we take the creation days to be 24-hour days, there is nothing in the Bible that tells us that the universe cannot be that old (young).

Does it diminish God when we think that he used a big explosion to start the process of star formation? I don't think so. Some people will argue that if God is eternal and infinite in power, then he can create all this in the twinkling of an eye. I would agree. But the reverse is also true. If God is so mighty he can also do things over billions of years and over distances that are measured in millions of light years. The argument cuts both ways.

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty

There is something that puzzles me, though. I know that many scientists come away from studying the universe or even the microcosms of this earth thinking that if there is a Creator God, he cannot be in control of all these forces. It seems that the more they study and analyze, the greater the universe becomes and the smaller their god. I have not studied the world scientifically the way they have, but I come away from something like the Hubble program thinking how great God is, much greater than I had even imagined up till now.

It is not likely, I say to myself, that all this came about through chance. And how can it be that we on earth live in relative peace and calm in a stormy universe with temperatures of a million degrees Kelvin and huge fields of X-rays that would fry an elephant in milliseconds unless there was a divine being who thought things through?

One thing we Christians have to be very careful with, however, is that we should not minimize the tremendous discoveries that scientists are making. I know we have to maintain a healthy kind of skepticism, but there's no denying that what my wife and I saw on slides that evening represents something that goes far beyond our knowledge to comprehend. What we saw was real, not some imaginary picture born of some mad scientist's imagination. The Bible was never intended to account for these discoveries. It addressed Abraham without telescopes at ground level.

But it also addresses us in Psalm 8 with even more force now than David could have imagined: *When I think of your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what on earth are we human beings that your are mindful of us, the children of Adam and Eve that you care for us?* David almost sounds like a modern skeptic when he says that this God of the universe could not be bothered with us. Maybe this is where so many scientists get stuck.

But David was not a skeptic, and we echo his words through the rest of space, past Hubble, *You have made us almost as great as the heavenly beings, and you crowned us with glory.* That's amazing. How vast the universe. How vast the benefits divine! **BW**

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent weekly that seeks the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ as it:
— reports on significant happenings in the Christian community and the world;
— expresses opinions that are infused by Scripture and Spirit and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
— provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

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Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1, Canada
Tel: (905) 682-8311; fax: (905) 682-8313;
e-mail: cceditor@aol.com

Letters

Lawyer Tamming shot from the hip ... and missed

In the Jan. 10 issue of CC, John Tamming raises a number of questions about Christian Reformed missions and agencies, not to find answers but to jump at conclusions — false conclusions, in my opinion. Having served on the World Missions committee for 17 years, I will restrict myself to the issues raised concerned that ministry.

World Missions, Tamming charges, is out of control. He comes to that conclusion because it ministers in 30 countries. I fail to see how one follows from the other. We may have missionaries in that many countries but the ministry is very effective and firmly in control, I can assure him.

Of course the questions raised are legitimate. As a matter of fact, they are raised and struggled with at our committee meetings, if not annually, certainly often. A reduction in the number of countries ministered in would be welcome. However, there are a number of factors that make it difficult.

Answering the call

Let me mention a few. When God opens a door, when new brothers and sisters in Christ beg us to come over and help, what are we to do? Say no for the sake of efficiency? We do not have the heart to do that. Moreover, we do set goals. We have no intention of staying forever on the same field. We strive to leave the work in the hands of indigenous Christians as soon as possible. But it is not always possible to do that as quickly as we hope. For instance, in Nigeria, though we have drastically reduced the number of personnel, there are so many problems that we cannot yet withdraw our support.

It is true that Japan has been a difficult field in terms of results. If we were a business we would have withdrawn long ago. However, we are a *church*. God charged us to bring the gospel to all nations, including Japan. Must we give up just because the work is difficult? Or must we be obedient?

Dedicated staff

If Mr. Tamming had done his homework, if he had done some research before shooting from the hip, we would have been glad to share with him some of the problems we struggle with. One of them is that more and more church planting is left to indigenous Christians. Missionaries increasingly become teachers and trainers of local pastors and evangelists. That means that fewer missionaries are needed, and we are able to enter more countries.

Let me assure you that we have a mission staff that is dedicated both at home and on the field. They work hard, long hours. They often suffer loneliness, and sometimes discouragement. Therefore I hope that this particular article will not reach them. They are separated from relatives, and often from their children. They live in primitive circumstances. And all this for salaries much lower than our professors at Calvin College and Seminary about which Tamming seems so concerned. And, incidentally, far below the income of most, if not all, lawyers.

Every Sunday there are hundreds of thousands around the world who bow with us in worship before the Lord, thanks to faithful, effective and efficient missionary work. Our church does not need to be discouraged in supporting our mission outreach. It deserves all the encouragement it can get.

Jack Quartel
Goderich, Ont.

Are we getting the most out of our 'quota' buck?

I read with great interest John Tamming's opinion piece (CC, Jan. 10) "Problems with paying quotas" (or "ministry shares," as the new terminology would have it). I agree that there is a lack of financial accountability, but also a lack of stewardship accountability in the Christian Reformed Church, and especially in the outreach arm of the CRC.

I have had the privilege of participating in some work projects and find that there is more conflict than co-operation, with many different organizations at work in the same foreign country. In one country you could have the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), World Missions, Christian Schools International, the Back to God Hour, Wycliffe Bible Translators, The Bible League, etc., all working independently, yet clamoring for the same dollars coming from the same people. (Not all of these are CRC programs, but all are recommended causes.)

When the CRC went through the motions of restructuring itself some years ago, it sounded like it meant business. Co-operation between organizations, less administration, fewer boards and managers would mean more dollars out in the fields where they would do the most good.

But to no avail. We are basically the same size or have increased in boards and administration. All areas of the CRC, down to local congregations, are stretching to make ends meet; and yet we continue to squander dollars that could be put to better use.

Sometimes there are good programs run by other churches, such as the Mennonites, Presbyterians and Baptists. Why are we there, then, when such groups have excellent programs going? Why not support them instead of duplicating what they are doing? Let's move to a country where there are no programs and concentrate our efforts there.

We do not need to be in 30 countries at once. Let's concentrate on two or three, and when things are stable and programs are working well, let's get out and go somewhere else.

Or should we all start thinking along the same lines as John Tamming and pay directly to whatever cause or organization we feel is doing the best job?

Jerry De Graaf
Hagersville, Ont.

You tackle controversial topics in sensitive manner

Recently I had an opportunity to sit back and go through a month or two of *Christian Courier* issues. (I hate to admit it, but I had fallen behind in my reading.)

What a delightful experience! You publish plenty of thought-provoking essays (especially your editorials), as well as articles with which to take issue. You address controversial and difficult topics in a gentle and sensitive way.

In my opinion, *Christian Courier* represents a positive, needed Christian voice in a confused and complicated world. Keep up the fine work!

Dr. John Van Dyk
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa

Are athletes worth more than pastors, doctors, teachers?

Mr. Janssens doesn't see anything wrong with paying Albert Belle $10 million per season for playing around with baseballs (CC, Jan. 10). As a matter of fact, he is delighted that at long last hockey is catching up, with Mario Lemieux raking in $11 million per season. To me this is plain ridiculous. No man is worth that many millions of dollars, throwing balls or hitting a puck. Something similar happened in Toronto when "the three tenors" charged $2,000 per ticket for a visit to the SkyDome.

Our Prime Minister who carries a lot of responsibility, doesn't even make half a million dollars, nor does President Clinton of the U.S. People should be well paid for a job well done, but where do we draw the line?

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Christian Courier

An independent weekly with a Reformed perspective.
Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY 14092.

Subscriptions:	**Canada**	**U.S.A.**
(effective Feb. 1, 1995)	(GST incl.)	(GST free)
one year (44 issues)	$43.50	$35.00 U.S.
two years (88 issues)	$82.00	$66.00 U.S.
three years (132 issues)	$123.00	$99.00 U.S.
overseas one year	$135 airmail	
	$85.00 surface mail	

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.; classified advertising: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. All deadlines are for the following week's issue. See classified pages for more details.
(ISSN 1192-3415) Published weekly on Fridays except for Feb. 28, April 4, May 30, July 11, Aug. 15, Oct. 3, Nov. 28, Dec. 26 by Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited.
All correspondence should be addressed to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel.: 905-682-8311 or fax: 905-682-8313
PRINTED IN CANADA
This tabloid contains recycled paper.

Opinion

Professional athletes are vastly overpaid because of monopolies

Bill Van Dyk

Rob Janssens' defense of multi-million dollar salaries for sports "heroes" (Jan.10) ignores a number of important factors.

Mr. Janssens believes that athletes receive astronomical salaries because they are the best in the world at what they do. But the question is not whether the best athletes should be paid more than other athletes. The question is: why do they get paid so extravagantly to play a game, while the *best* teachers, the *best* police officers, the *best* nurses, and even the *best* leaders get paid so little.

The real reason for today's obscene sports salaries is complex. The Toronto Blue Jays can afford to pay Roger Clemens $25 million dollars because the Blue Jays have an *exclusive* major league franchise for the wealthy and populous Metropolitan Toronto area.

The Blue Jays, legally a business corporation, have a *monopoly* in Ontario, by agreement with the other major league teams. Normally, such practices are illegal.

Eliminate the competition

This monopoly would have made the baseball owners fabulously wealthy had it not been for the fact that players were not stupid. As Mr. Janssens correctly points out, after years of abuse and servitude, the players unionized, fought for free agency and succeeded in obtaining a larger share of the spoils for themselves. Owners simply raised ticket prices and advertising rates. The results are players who make $1 million a year.

This professional sports monopoly is possible because of several historical developments. First, both the National and American leagues gradually eliminated the competing professional baseball leagues (of which there were dozens in the early part of this century) by buying up the teams one by one, gutting them of their best players, and converting them into minor league affiliates.

Second, when the anti-competitive practices of the leagues became an issue before the government, the major leagues obtained a legislative exemption to the existing laws governing unfair trading practices. As part

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Combs, Meusel, Gehrig and Ruth, the Yankees' "Murderers' Row," ca. 1928-29. Despite forced service to one team, very good players made very good wages: $10,000 a year. Gehrig made $30,000; Ruth made $80,000. When asked if he deserved to make more than President Hoover, Ruth replied, "I had a better year than he did."

of this exemption, they were obliged to provide an independent commissioner who would ensure the integrity of the game, and obligation the owners have flouted fc several years by appointing Bud Selig, *owner* of the Milwaukee Brewers, as "acting" commissioner while the other owners attempted to crush the player's union.

Third, the interest of the two leagues nicely coincides with the interests of the national TV networks which wanted exclusive broadcast rights to an exclusive competition. Fans, say, in Chicago, wouldn't be interested in watching a baseball series between New York and Los Angeles unless they were first convinced that there was only one important baseball league and this was it.

Consider this: Would the CFL be better or worse off if it had to compete with various professional football leagues in the U.S. instead of a single NFL monopoly?

Scandalous use of tax money

The fact is, the sports monopolies have become corrupt and disgusting. Taxpayers are bilked into paying for over-priced stadiums to keep their local team in town, and, outrageously, subsidizing wealthy corporations through tax deductions for the expense of their private boxes. Yes, your tax dollars help pay for those corporate boxes at SkyDome, and indeed for SkyDome itself, so the owners of the Blue Jays can afford to pay Roger Clemens $25 million over three years. (It is an incomprehensible scandal to me that tax dollars from the citizens of any city are used to subsidize the owners and players of professional sports teams!)

The result: players treat fans and officials with contempt, abuse drugs and squander their talents on fast and extravagant lifestyles. The owners schedule more and more games, sell more franchises and desperately extend their seasons, trying to squeeze every last cent from the devoted and deluded fans. Thus the idiocy of baseball in late October and hockey in June.

The 'best of the best'?

Many people assume that a single major league for each professional sport is great. The winner of the World Series is clearly the "best of the best." We Blue Jays fans had our chance to thumb our noses at Atlanta and Philadelphia and all the rest of the continent. But most people have never experienced the alternative. What if the government had stepped in, as it should have, and prevented the National and American leagues from systematically destroying the competing leagues? What if the major leagues were broken up today, like AT&T?

What we would have instead would be perhaps a half dozen "major" leagues, and every city the size of Hamilton, Ont., or greater, would have its own professional ball team (as they did in the early 1900s). These players would be paid reasonable salaries and the competition between cities like Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton would be intense and exciting.

Parents could afford to take their young children to a dozen or more games a year because tickets would be reasonably priced, and their seats would actually be close enough to the field to see some of the action. Local papers would cover local teams and local heroes.

Sports in its proper place

Players — who might actually live in the town they play for — would keep their sense of self-importance in proportion; ill-behaved players would be fired, like any ill-behaved employee in any business. And sports would be put back into its proper place: a summer diversion, a recreation, a chance for parent and child to enjoy a sunny day watching a great game. After all, what really makes a great game is not the over-rated stats and the celebrity status of the players: it's the quality of the competition, the heart and soul of the sport.

Pro athletes are over-paid because powerful owners, gullible fans and the government have colluded, creating the conditions under which players are able to demand and get as much as they want. I doubt that most people would reject such a salary. But to argue that these salaries are in any way "fair" or just is absurd.

We Christians argue that pornography, drug abuse and crime are evidence of a "post-Christian" culture in North America. I would argue that the obscene salaries, and the even more obscene public veneration paid to sport figures, is better evidence of the same thing. Greed seems to have been dropped from our list of mortal sins.

Bill Van Dyk is a computer consultant in Kitchener, Ont.

Letter

Are athletes worth more than pastors, doctors...?

... continued from page 5

Think of our pastors. In general, the Christian Reformed Church pays them well. But there are still CRC members who have a difficult time voting for an annual budget which shows a salary with benefits of over $70,000. I know of a pastor who drove a woman in his congregation to a hospital 75 km away in the middle of the night under blizzard conditions to be with her husband who had a stroke. Pastors don't expect salary figures in the millions, but are showing care and concern for their flock. They are our heroes, and I rate their work hundred times higher than that of hitting pucks or throwing balls to please a fanatic crowd.

In and around Hamilton we have a good many excellent organists in the CRC, but they are playing instruments in Anglican, Presbyterian or United churches. Why? They are receiving renumerations from $8,000 to $18,000, but CRC people are not ready to pay the price for music experts. Many of our organists have a difficult time getting even $2,000.

Why did Rome fall?

Where do we draw the line?

By now, you'll probably know that I am not exactly a sports fan, and I probably wouldn't pay 10 cents to watch a hockey game. I still believe athletes should be paid, and paid well if they perform well. We all have our priorities. But I would rather pay a teacher in one of our Christian schools $100,000 than millions to Wayne Gretzki for hitting a puck.

I can only hope and trust that Mr. Janssens will be using some common sense in telling his students that there is a limit to what top athletes should be paid. He should also tell them that Rome went to pieces because of materialism and sports.

Klaas Terpstra
Hamilton, Ont.

Help for developing godly families

Olive Shoots Around Your Table

by John Visser

Belleville, Ont.: Essence Publishing, 1996, 426 pp. Reviewed by Margaret Griffioen-Drenth, Burlington, Ont.

Have you ever tried to separate the wheat from chaff as you browsed through the hundreds of "self-help" books in your local Christian bookstore?

In *Olive Shoots Around Your Table*, John Visser, senior pastor of the 700-member Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Belleville, Ont., provides a concise and practical tool for anyone who has ever been or still is part of a family — for everyone! Using Scripture, some of the best Christian resources, and his own extensive expertise as a pastor and counsellor, Visser clearly provides practical advise for becoming all we and the children we may have, are intended to be in Christ.

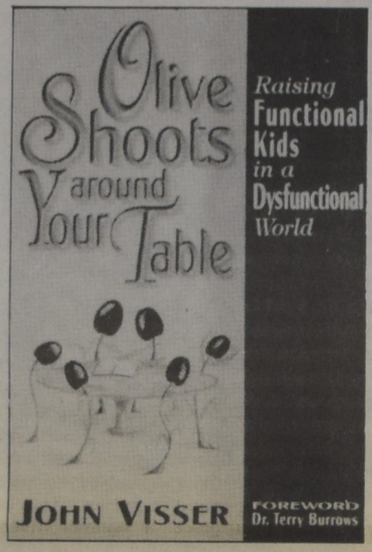
A lot of what Visser says isn't new, especially to those who read a lot of material on psychology, family dysfunction, child rearing etc. What is particularly helpful, though, is that the reader can gain the best insights from many resources, compiled in a reader-friendly manner. The examples he provides from his counselling experience greatly enhance the book. His approach from a pastoral perspective helps to keep the healing power of Christ in the forefront, something which is often lacking in even Christian self-help books.

The influence of generational sins

Visser shows how who we are is greatly influenced by our past, especially painful pasts, and how we, in turn, find unresolved baggage influencing our ability to nurture our children, spouses and others with whom we have relationships. Especially refreshing is his firm belief that healing is possible through Christ, and that healing is a process — no quick, easy fixes, but no wallowing in the past forever, either. Generational cycles of sin are replaced with "a never ending cycle of blessing."

"The good news of the gospel is that no matter where we have been or how we have been shaped, by the blood of Jesus we have been 'redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to [us] from [our] forefathers' (1 Peter 1:18). We can be free! And we can leave a godly legacy to our children."

Part one of *Olive Shoots* looks at the family unit, particularly dysfunctional families. Visser also spends time explaining the


Olive Shoots around Your Table
Raising Functional Kids in a Dysfunctional World
JOHN VISSER
FOREWORD Dr. Terry Burrows

religiously dysfunctional family. "A religiously dysfunctional family tends to be, on average, colored by many or all of the following characteristics and parental conditions associated with family dysfunction:" extreme rigidity; punitive or punishment oriented; judgmental; non-loving; perfectionists; having a sense of inadequacy. Visser explains each of these and then provides a model for how each family member works within, and is affected by, these characteristics.

Part two is a practical look at breaking the cycle of dysfunction. Here Visser identifies four "core issues" and examines them in detail. "Core issues are conflicts or problems which occur repeatedly in our lives, consciously or unconsciously. They originate from unresolved areas in our past which need to be addressed and worked through. If these issues are not resolved satisfactorily, we continue to carry these conflicts with us into the present, thereby distorting our world and life view and affecting our behavior." Visser's four issues are a reworking of Charles Whitfield's 13 issues described in *Healing the Child Within*.

The four "core issues" are: *Idolatry* ("looking to something or somebody other than God to meet our needs, and thus living to please them"); *grieving our losses* ("Grief is the emotion we experience when we suffer loss"); *damaged emotions*; and *shame-based addiction*. "I used to think that guilt and shame were the same thing.... There is a substantial difference.... Guilt is feeling bad because of what you have done.... Shame ... is feeling bad because you are wrong. It is much deeper than guilt and much more controlling in our lives."

This section ends with a wonderful chapter, "Getting It All Together." It takes us beyond the healing process and shows how "as we grow in our walk and relationship with the Lord ... our gifts become more clearly defined, and so does our niche in life. Knowing what we are or are not good at, and knowing that is God's design for our lives, we don't have to fret about all the things we are not. We can bless God for who we are by his grace, and concentrate on those areas where we feel he places a call on our lives."

Practical applications for raising children

Part three focuses on raising "functional" kids. Visser builds these chapters around Matt. 7:5: "Take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly... the speck... in your brother's eye." Visser argues that blind spots in our lives inhibit our ability to parent effectively. "The point [Jesus] is making is that unless you deal with the unresolved issues of your own life, you are blind to see what is happening in the other person's life; your biases either cause you to underreact or overreact." Visser gives concrete examples of how this works in parenting.

This section of *Olive Shoots* provides practical applications for child rearing. Visser examines the stages of child development, loving unconditionally, effective discipline, living with regret. He ends with a wonderful epilogue, "A Tale of Two Families." I won't give it away, but if you're looking for a simple, yet effective argument on the value of Christian families in society, this little piece provides some interesting thoughts.

Zondervan broadens online services, celebrates first Internet anniversary

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Zondervan Publishing House is expanding its Internet involvement, not only on its World Wide Web (www.zondervan.com) and America Online (keyword: zon) sites, but also through its new dedicated e-mail service.

The Zondervan Website, winner of the 1996 Apex Award of Excellence for Web pages, has grown since it first appeared on Dec. 4, 1995. Today, more than 10,000 people a month visit, reading information about Zondervan's featured titles and authors. Updated daily, the site now offers audio, a calendar of national events, links to a variety of religion news sites, a weekly financial column by Daniel Busby, author of *The 1997 Zondervan Minster's Tax Guide* and co-author of *The Christian's Guide to Worry-Free Money Management*, a monthly column by Gary Moore, author of *Ten Golden Rules for Financial Success*, the monthly Zondervan Press Syndicate of feature articles, a serialization of an abridged Zondervan novel, currently *Ulterior Motives* by Terri Blackstock (before that, *Blood of Heaven* by Bill Myers and *The Campaign* by Marilyn Tucker Quayle and Nancy Tucker Northcott), and special information on current events.

Zondervan is also the host of the Green Ribbon Campaign for Responsibility in Free Speech, inviting other Websites to participate: more than 300 have, among them *Christianity Today*'s Christianity.Net. In the coming year, the site, called "rich and diverse" by *Publishers Weekly*, will also offer author interviews and ad slicks for retailers.

Zondervan also has a site on America OnLine through Christianity Online, a division of Christianity Today, Inc., in Carol Stream, Ill. The AOL site primarily consists of new product information with a direct link to Zondervan's Website.

Canada Post will celebrate each Chinese New Year

(Canadian Scene) — Canada Post Corporation has released a stamp to celebrate the Chinese New Year — the Year of the Ox — which begins at sunset on Feb. 6, 1997. It is the first of a series of 12, one of which will be released annually, designed to illustrate the theme of each Chinese New Year. This year's issue will be available in sheets of 25 or as a two-stamp sheet.

The stamp features a brush drawing of an ox noted for strength and hard work. Above the ox is a red diamond shape with the Chinese character "fu," meaning good fortune, happiness and well-being. It was designed by Ivy Li, co-ordinator and professor of the graphic design program at Sheridan College, Oakville, Ont. The illustration is by artist Liu Xiang-Ping who worked on a number of stamps for the Chinese post office before coming to Canada.

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Church

Cuban doctor faced bear, firing squad for sharing Bibles, preaching

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (EP) — Dr. Eliezer Veguilla's medical training had prepared him to deal with a wide range of emergency situations, but only his Christian faith had prepared him for the terrible ordeal he suffered at the hands of Cuba's secret police.

Veguilla was arrested in Cuba on suspicion of being a CIA spy and taken to a local prison where officials tried to force him to reveal the source of Bibles he was distributing.

Veguilla's first shock came when he met his cellmate — a huge bear. "When I was inside the cell with the bear, I felt the Holy Spirit telling me to 'fight the bear,'" Veguilla told journalist Dan Wooding in an interview at the Open Doors office in California. "I was ready to fight it but then I quickly felt like Daniel in the Lion's Den. I knew that the same God of Daniel was also the same one I had with me to protect me.

"When my heart calmed down a little, I noticed that the bear was very still and chained up. However, I still thought he could reach me and finish me in one second as I sat in a corner. The cell was very dirty with the bear's waste matter everywhere and he smelled terrible. I sat quietly on the floor praising God and, amazingly, the bear remained calm the entire time. The only explanation I have is that God controlled him as I faced death in one of Castro's cells."

'Lord, I worship you'

Veguilla said that his persecutors had stood near the door waiting for him to scream out for them to open the door, but he had not done this, instead he said he continued to praise God in a low voice saying, "Lord, I worship and glorify you."

After several hours he was freed only to face a worse ordeal. Veguilla knew that he was prepared to die for his faith and determined that under no circumstances would he compromise his contacts. "They took one man away and I heard gun shots and screaming," he continued. "I was next. I was taken to a room where there was blood on the floor. I was tied to a large piece of wood on the wall."

"Some men were then lined up and began aiming their guns at me. As they did I began shouting, '*Cuba para Christo!*' 'Cuba for Christ!' I then said, 'You are murderers, but God loves you. *Cuba para Christo!*' I then prayed, 'Lord, if this is my time, Amen. I am ready to die.'

"Then I heard a voice say, 'Fire' and I braced to receive the bullets, but all I heard was the dull thud of the gun triggers going off. There were no bullets in the guns and they all started to laugh. I later discovered that the other 'prisoners' were actually members of the secret police who had been dressed up as prisoners as part of this elaborate and cruel hoax."

47 days of torture

The interrogation continued for 47 days during which Veguilla was submitted to other types of torture, such as being switched back and forth between below-freezing and boiling-hot chambers, having to try and sleep with two firearms aimed at his bed, misinformation concerning the state of his family, and being awakened at all hours of the night for intense interrogation.

Unable to find any real evidence for a conviction, the authorities placed him under house arrest for two years, which kept him from becoming involved in any Christian activities. He was eventually freed. After worldwide protests led by Open Doors with Brother Andrew and the Southern Baptist Alliance, on Sept. 15, 1995, (his birthday) he was allowed to move to the United States.

Being imprisoned for religious beliefs is a sort of family tradition for Veguilla. His father, the Rev. Leoncio Veguilla, was imprisoned in 1965 along with over 50 pastors and missionaries.

Veguilla worked as a doctor in Cuba and was able to start several churches and distribute Bibles. But his troubles began when he became involved with a Western organization that was bringing thousands of Bibles into Cuba in the 1980s. "Meeting with these brave Bible couriers opened my eyes even more to the power of God's Word," he stated. "I would help distribute their Bibles around Cuba and then I started having problems with the secret police."

Persecution creates unity

His difficulties came to a head in 1986 when he organized a large Christian youth event in Havana. "The government only permitted us to gather 300 people, but some 1,000 showed up" he recalled. "We then had a similar event in Santiago Cuba on the other side of the island and the same thing happened."

At the closing of the Havana meeting, Veguilla was arrested by two secret police agents, along with two others, including an American pastor from Atlanta.

Government persecution of the church in Cuba has had at least one good side effect, said Veguilla — the church is very unified. "We do not speak so much about denominations. For instance, our relationship with the Catholic Church is different to that in many other Latin countries. In Cuba, you will find a Catholic priest and an evangelical pastor praying together throughout the week. This has occured because we have all suffered the same experience. The whole Church in Cuba has been attacked and this has made us very united."

Survey finds doctors believe religious faith aids healing

NORWALK, Conn. (EP) — Does religious faith play a role in speeding recovery from physical maladies? Fully 99 per cent of American doctors in a recent survey said Yes. An equally high number said they believe that religious practices such as prayer and meditation can speed recovery of those who are ill.

Of those doctors surveyed, 95 per cent said they had treated patients who believed that religious activities improved their physical condition. The study also found that 68 per cent of doctors said they had prayed or meditated while seeking to recover from an illness of their own.

A smaller majority (71 per cent) said that physicians who are asked for prayer should join a patient in prayer, while 79 per cent said they believe that God sometimes intervenes on behalf of a seriously ill person.

The survey of 269 family physicians, taken by Yankelovich Partners at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Family Physicians, was released Dec. 16 during a continuing education course on spirituality and medicine at Harvard Medical School.

"Through the ages physicians have witnessed recoveries they can't attribute solely to medical procedures," explained Dr. Herbert Benson, president of the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. "Now many physicians are beginning to hold that belief can have a profound influence on health and well-being and they see it as an integral part of their traditional treatment plan."

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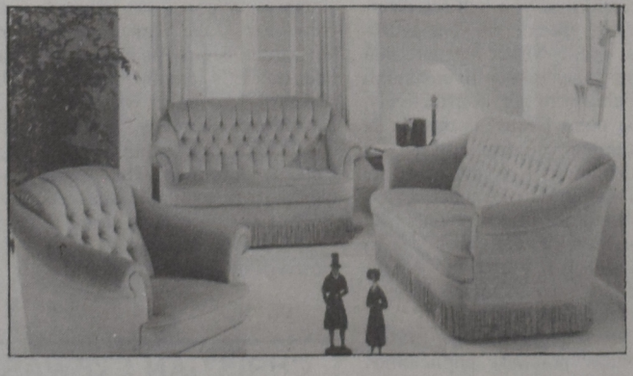

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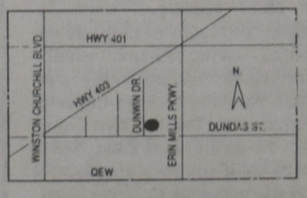

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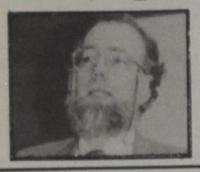

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
* Al Wolters

God's people as a warhorse

"For the Lord Almighty will care for his flock, the house of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle" (Zech. 10:3, NIV).

What a striking image! The prophet Zechariah compares the house of Judah (his name for the Jews who had returned from exile) to both sheep and a horse. The comparison with sheep is well-known in the Bible, since the relationship between God and his people is often depicted in terms of the relationship between a shepherd and his flock. But the prophet here suddenly mixes his metaphors, and says that these sheep will become like a warhorse. As far as I know, this second image is unique to this passage. The animal that is known for its docility and meekness will change into the animal that is known for its aggressive self-confidence in war.

The horse, we must remember, played a different role in the societies of the ancient Near East then what we are used to in the modern West. In our culture, we might think primarily of race horses, or workhorses on a farm. But in the Bible horses are almost always instruments of war, the equivalent of tanks in our modern day. That is why kings were actually forbidden to own horses in ancient Israel, so that their trust might not be in military strength but in the Lord.

Yet there are also places in the Bible where a warhorse is depicted in positive terms, or is associated with the heavenly armies of God. Think, for example, of the magnificent description of the horse in Job 39: 19-25, and of the fiery chariots which Elisha saw at Dothan (2 Kings 6:17). In the book of Zechariah, too, horses are often associated with God, for example in 1:8 and 6:2. It is also clearly as a positive image that the horse functions in the present context. God in his grace will turn the sheep of his people into what the NIV calls "a proud horse in battle."

Actually, this is perhaps not the best translation. Other English Bible versions have "his royal horse" (New King James Version) or "his majestic horse" (New American Standard Bible), which captures the element of kingly majesty. Presumably the horse which the king rode into battle was an especially magnificent animal, fitted with costly trappings suitable for a king. Literally, the Hebrew original says: "Horse of his (royal) glory."

Two right approaches

Let me share with you comments on this passage by two famous figures in the history of Bible interpretation. One is from John Calvin, who is acknowledged on all sides to have been one of the world's greatest biblical expositors. He writes the following: "God then thus intimates that he indeed required obedience from his people, and intended to retain his own right, to ride as it were on his own people, but yet that he would not oppress them, and that on the contrary he would make them like a splendid horse." Characteristically for Calvin, he stresses the gracious sovereignty of God toward his people.

The other comment is from Julius Wellhausen, one of the giants of a more liberal, historical-critical interpretation of the Bible. He writes "This prophecy, that the sheep would be transformed into warhorses, was fulfilled in a remarkable way in the Maccabean wars." Very uncharacteristically for Wellhausen, he here interprets this passage as being quite straightforwardly fulfilled in the great struggle for religious freedom which the Maccabees fought in the second century, B.C., when God led his people, against all odds, to a great military victory over their oppressors.

In my own view, both Calvin and Wellhausen were right. This passage tells us both about God's non-oppressive authority over his people, and about the great military victory which he gave them centuries after Zechariah's time. And it encourages us to believe that we, too, under God's rule can accomplish great and glorious deeds.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He spends most of his free time studying the book of Zechariah.

Writing contest first of its kind for Christian Reformed agencies

Fostering missions awareness the goal

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRCWM/CRWRC) — The mission and development agencies of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada are partners in a new effort to reach out to Canadian high school-aged youth.

Designed to complement the extremely popular World Missions poster contest (for ages 4-13), the 1997 Free to Serve Writing Contest will be the first of its kind for World Missions and CRWRC. The primary objectives of the contest are to foster awareness and generate excitement for missions among young people.

Entrants will be encouraged to select a theme of their choice and have been given a length restriction of 25 to 500 words. Christian school teachers across Canada have been asked to integrate the contest into their term planning, while students in the public system will take up contact with their pastor.

Positive feedback

Each entry will fall into one of three categories, (grades 9-10, 11, or 12-OAC), and the judging panel is being selected from a group of volunteers. The judging panel will be comprised of faculty and students from The Kings University College in western Canada, and a group yet to be determined for Ontario and Eastern Canada entrants. Judges will be familiar with the cause of missions and will be looking for entries that display both originality and creative flair.

The agencies have received positive feedback from principals, teachers and pastors, all of whom will help promote the contest among students. "The contest provides an excellent opportunity for youth to think about the importance of missions and will encourage them to play a more active role in the missions vision of the church," says John Brent, a spokesperson for CRWRC and CRCWM. "We pray that the Lord will lead us as we continue to reach out to our brothers and sisters here at home and around the world."

Christian lawyers challenge South Africa's abortion law

PRETORIA, South Africa (REC) — More than 160 members of the Christian Lawyers Association of South Africa will challenge the country's new abortion law. The appeal will go to the constitutional court.

The lawyers are arguing that the constitutional provision that life is a fundamental right conflicts with the liberal abortion law recently passed by parliament. Since that right was used to declare the death penalty unconstitutional, it should also apply to abortion, the lawyers believe.

South African Adventists remain separate

CAPETOWN, South Africa (REC) — The Seventh Day Adventist Church in the Cape area of South Africa failed to get enough votes to merge its racially divided sections. The SDA church there is divided along the lines of apartheid and needed a 75 per cent majority to disband and reform itself.

The mixed-race conference of the church voted 94 per cent in favor of a merger, and the black conference voted 97 per cent in favor. The white conference attained only 70 per cent in favor.

Garth Brainbridge, president of the white conference, said there was concern over the financial viability of the new church. The whites feared they did not have the money to equalize pastoral salaries across the church. Allan Christmas, of the mixed-race conference, however, said that some whites feared being swamped by a black majority (10,000 versus 3,750) and losing administrative control.

Christmas added that many congregations were already racially mixed, although the three conferences were formally defined along racial lines.

In the Natal and Free State, the SDA churches are already merged, while in the Transvaal, they remain separated.

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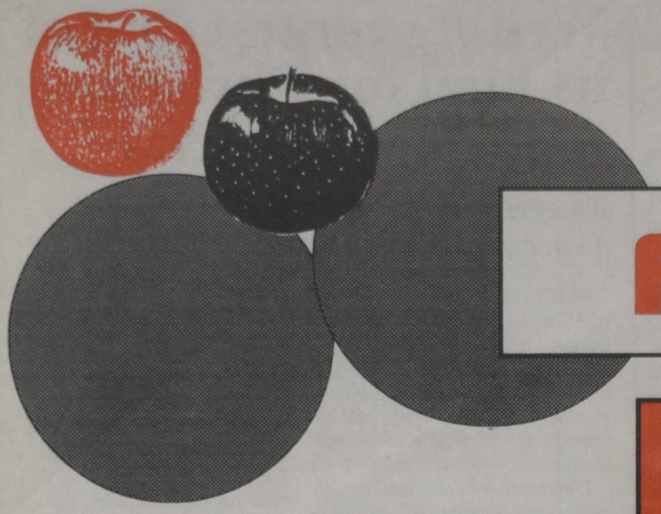


APPLES

"Which one?" I asked again.

Amber Goddard

If I stare out of a car window long enough, I start to feel like a character in a movie.

As if I'm in the scene where the girl is leaving her hometown in the country to travel to California to become a big star and prove to the entire small-town population that she wasn't just some small-town actress, and there's some sappy good-bye soundtrack in the background, and her face is reflected in the window, and she flashes back to all the memories she's leaving behind — memories of her first starring role in "Our Town" when she was 15 and her daddy had given her a dozen roses at curtain call — and a tear falls, and fade. Sometimes I vary the plot a little, but her face is always reflected in the window and the tear always falls.

"I really don't think God would be a giggling teenager or a middle-aged businessman with an imitation leather briefcase," I told her.

That day, I was trying to decide whether she was on her way to movie stardom or a singing career when the woman next to me shook my arm.

"God made da man in he own image. It say so in da Bible." She smiled at me, and I nodded politely.

She made me nervous, the way most old people did. It was their skin. It was as if the skin had a mind of its own, and it knew the bones it covered were getting old and it tried to pull away and save itself but it could get only so far until it just hung there in lifeless creases of weathered flesh. I always felt sorry for the skin, because it seemed like it had put up a valiant struggle for its survival and lost.

About three weeks earlier my friend Ella and I had picked up two hitchhikers and taken them halfway to Vegas. It had probably been a stupid thing to do, as we both could very likely have been found dead on a deserted road where girls dumb enough to pick up hitchhikers wind up, but we did it anyway.

I have this theory that if I had been meant to die that day, at that time, I would have, no matter what I was doing or where I was, and I would rather be murdered at the hands of crazed hitchhikers than spontaneously choke on a cookie or trip over a phone cord, fall and crack my skull into small pieces. Or die of old age. The worst, to me, would be to get old and die after even my skin had turned against me. I checked my watch to see if the bus was nearing my stop.

She went on.

"If all dat's true, how we 'ta know He ain't on 'dis bus?" She didn't seem to be asking this of me, or of anyone except maybe herself. I went back to staring out the window.

I remembered the time, when I was about eight, my family had gone to Las Vegas. All the little kids loved Circus Circus, and they all ran around with fluorescent stuffed elephants under their arms, waving their quarters and trying to win the really big prizes, like a stand-up Pink Panther doll. But I just hated the carpets — I remembered how sad they made me, how pathetically sad it was to be scrambling around on those gaudy, faded carpets trying to win some toy that would end up in a garage sale once it got home with me. I even felt bad for the toys, how so many of them would end up on The Isle of Misfit Toys like on the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Christmas special. My family really liked to gamble, though, so I sold my share of fluorescent elephants. The woman shook my arm again.

"How we 'ta know?"

I realized she had been asking me the question earlier when I had assumed she was talking to herself. This time, there was no denying she was asking me. I glanced around the bus to see if anyone else was listening, but the three other passengers were all busily looking occupied. There was a man near the front reading a newspaper and clearing his throat at regular intervals. In the row across from us were two girls whispering between themselves and pointing at sections from a romance novel with an impassioned couple on the front.

"I really don't think God would be a giggling teenager or a middle-aged businessman with an imitation leather briefcase," I told her.

She laughed.

"Sweetie," she said kindly, "it ain't fo' you or me 'ta judge what He wans 'ta do. He kin be 'dis here bus if'n he wans, and all's we gotta do is praise 'da wheels if he say to."

She had on a dress that I think my grandmother had worn when she was alive — not the same dress, but one just like it. It was dark blue polyester and had little white apples all over it. When I was little, I used to pretend I was picking apples, but I'm not sure why, since I never actually put the fake, invisible apples anywhere or did anything with them, like bake invisible apple pies. I'd just grab at her skirt and laugh, and she'd say, "Are you pickin' apples?" and I'd say, "Uh huh," and she'd laugh and I'd laugh some more and pick some more apples.

"So if He's here, which one of us is He?" I asked her.

"Wat do 'dat matta?"

The sun had gone down and I couldn't see much out of the bus window to tell me where we were, so I checked my watch again and willed the driver to hurry up and let me get home. My feet hurt and I still had a philosophy paper to write. I sighed loudly.

"How can it not matter?" I wanted to know. "If you believe that one of us riding this bus is God, I think it matters a lot."

"I di'nt never say I thought He's one 'a us, I's jus' sayin' He very well could be." She always spoke patiently and never stopped smiling.

"Which one?" I asked again.

"It ain't a matter of pickin' — it's jus' knowin' dat you don' know."

I wanted to argue, to yell and scream and say of course it mattered, because did she really think the Creator of the world would come down in the form of a 14-year-old reading trashy novels or a bus driver or an old woman in a dress like my grandmother's or a cynical college student with sore feet? But the bus stopped and she patted my knee and got off the bus before I could say anything.

As we pulled away from the stop I stared out the window again even though all I could see were traffic lights shining in the dark. I tried to remember where I had left off in the movie plot, but I couldn't think of anything but the traffic lights and the way they bounced off the wet streets. There was something so painfully beautiful about the red stoplight flashing off the rain-soaked road that it seems stupid to me now, but there was. I thought about telling the girls across from me to look out their window, but I didn't. I just stared out at the street and my face was reflected in the window.

Amber Goddard is an English major at a local junior college in Bakersfield, California. She's a published poet and is editor of Liquid Ohio. *She believes there is a need for "a hopeful voice that isn't tied down to a preconceived notion of cynical, twenty-something angst, someone to provide a glimpse of the simplicity and peace of a strong relationship with God, while remaining creative."*

Feature

Poetry by Marcia Krugh Leaser

Choice

The pain is real, Lord.
I have good reason to feel this way
trying
waiting
striving
failing.
Hate!
It's my right.
Yet
in the stillness of my soul
a voice,
a quiet voice
barely audible
but speaking louder than the pain:
"Love.
It's My command."

What If?

We come to you, Lord,
with our little crooked sticks
begging you to straighten them.
Broken lives
broken promises
all lie at your feet
expecting your mercy and grace.
But
what if
you want us to accept
our crooked pieces of wood
and learn to lean on you?
What if
you want us
to live through a crisis
or an unfulfilled dream?
Some call it unanswered prayer,
but
what if through this
we find
acceptance
tolerance
and strength?
Dare we call it
unanswered?
Dare we even ask
what if?

None So Blind

"You can't lead me, you're blind," I said.
But as he took my hand
I saw things through his sightless eyes
that I knew not were grand.
The beauty of a raindrop,
the softness of a rose,
the texture of a maple leaf,
the silence of the snow.
I then realized as I followed
this man who could not see,
with eyes that were not blinded
I saw far less than he.

Following

One way is better than the rest,

One path is clearer, brighter, best.

And though sometimes it slips from view,

There's no denying that it's true.

Or that the One who bids me come

Is God's annointed, living Son.

I will follow where he leads,

I will share eternity.

Painter God

God
the master artist
paints
the blades of grass with dew
paints
the brown upon the sparrow
paints
the sun a golden hue
then he —
with true artistic form
paints
joy where sorrow grew
God
the master artist
paints
the crystal mountain streams
paints
the lily of the valley
paints
our lonely lives with dreams
then he
with mercy, poise and grace
paints
love on you and me.

A Silent Prayer

Give me wisdom, Lord,
to listen.
Give me insight, Lord,
to see.
Give me courage, Lord,
to whisper,
"Here am I, send me."

Feature

Being civil Christians: A difficult assignment?

Marian Van Til

Dr. Richard Mouw spoke two weeks ago at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., as part of the college's Staley Lecture Series (see CC news story, Jan. 24). Mouw combines diverse talents: he is both a philosopher — he taught philosophy at Calvin College for 17 years — and an administrator — he is president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

His topic, civility, holds a particular interest for me. Hearing him address that issue was like a salve that offered moral support: his lectures occurred shortly after I had for the umpteenth time sat in a theatre trying to carefully watch a film for review while a few people disrupted it by publicly discussing what was unfolding on the screen or in their personal lives. (Incidentally, in theatres, I've found, Canadians are no more polite than Americans.)

It's tough to be on the receiving end of rudeness. I have to force myself to respond civilly to such people. Why do we who are supposed to reflect the mind of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit often find it so difficult to be civil, *especially* to fellow Christ-believers with whom we strongly disagree. That's what Mouw is concerned with. Civility has become his signature topic.

His book *Uncommon Decency* has hit a nerve among North Americans tired of growing public expressions of insolence, selfishness, rudeness and generally ungracious behavior, and fearful of what such behavior might mean for American and Canadian society.

Mouw has the credentials that show he deserves the high profile he now enjoys among Reformed and evangelical Christians. Besides his academic forays, he is asked to speak to numerous national organizations and gets invited to the annual U.S. Presidential Prayer Breakfast in Washington. Perhaps that's because he models the kind of civility he advocates, and his speaking style and books and articles are both engaging and insightful.

'Convicted civility' needed

Mouw says he got into the topic of civility because of Martin Marty, the well-known Lutheran theologian at the University of Chicago. Marty observed that "people who are civil tend not to have convictions, and people who have convictions tend not to be civil." What we need, said Marty, is a "convicted civility."

Mouw concurred, and that got him thinking on the topic. It *isn't* easy to be civil with people with whom you disagree while still maintaining the strength of your own convictions. How do we do that?

Some Christians would argue that's not something we even need to be concerned about, because defending our faith is all that counts. But Mouw argues that being civil is *part of* that faith. It's a matter of biblical justice and hospitality. He refers to 1 Peter 2:17 (NIV, Mouw's translation in brackets): "Show respect to everyone [honor all human beings], love the brotherhood of believers [love the church], fear God, and honor the king [honor the emperor]."

Mouw notes that the word he translates as "honor" means "to have regard for the well-being of." The same word is used to refer to how we treat our fellow human beings in general ("respect" in NIV), and how we treat those who govern us. It's true that we have to "defend" our faith in the sense that we must "always be prepared to answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have," as Peter also says (1 Peter 3:15).

But many Christians forget what comes in the next verse, says Mouw. Peter adds, "But do this *with gentleness and respect*, (our italics) keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." We can't expect to "defend" the truth by beating people over the head with it.

So, Mouw asks, "What does it mean to speak 'with gentleness and respect' in the debate over abortion? in the debate over homosexuality? over euthanasia?" He makes clear he has strong convictions about such issues and approaches them from a traditional biblical stance. That doesn't mean we can demonize women who have abortions; or that we can refuse to admit that Christians have a long history of persecuting people who are homosexual, and that we may be participating in that history.

"I feel very strongly that euthanasia, for example, is wrong," he says. "But as odd as it sounds, it's important to understand the motives of the people who do this. I'm concerned with how the battle lines are being drawn."

What we need in approaching such issues and people with whom we radically, and often legitimately, disagree is Marty's "convicted civility."

Mouw cites six ways we can cultivate civility and has five recommendations which will help us act as Christians in public life, being what he calls "public disciples."

Honoring God's image in others

Mouw says we can cultivate civility:

... By learning to honor humanness.

If my experience is common, I think many of us Reformed types have some difficulty with this because our thinking carefully delineates *us* (God's inner circle, his adopted heirs through Christ) and *them* (human beings on a sort of second level because they've rejected salvation). We like to forget that word "adopted," that without Christ we're all in the same (sinking) boat.

Mouw reminds us that the divine image infiltrates all of us human beings. He says Kuyper called human beings "works of divine art." From the Catholic quarter, he "highly recommends" becoming acquainted with the spiritual journey of the late 19th century saint, Theresa of Lisieux.

She tells of a thorough dislike of a fellow nun. Finally, Theresa decides to contemplate this nun who irritates her as a work of art created by Christ. When she does that, her attitude changes.

If we see all people that way, it will change the way we live. Mouw relates that Mother Theresa, for instance, says that before you go out into the streets you contemplate Jesus so you will recognize him in his dreadful disguise in the poorest of the poor.

Empathy and openings

... By learning empathy.

The joy and hope, grief and anguish of the people of our time must be reflected in the joy and hope, grief and anguish of the people of God. We must find an empathy in our hearts for others.

... By cultivating missionary learning.

Mouw asserts that "when we go into the public arena we must see ourselves as missionaries." But good missionaries study the culture they're addressing and understand it. We have to "discern 'redemptive motives,' looking for openings" as Paul did on Mars Hill. Paul didn't immediately condemn the Ephesians for idolatry, and he knew their culture and poetry, from which he drew when he addressed them.

Mouw emphasizes his point by recalling a fascinating example from his own experience. Living almost next door to Los Angeles, he and some local pastors attended the Rolling Stones concert there when the Stones were on their last tour — "to study the culture," he says with half a smile.

Mouw was asked what he as a Christian would say to the 78,000 concert attendees if he had the chance. What point of contact he would use to get them to listen?

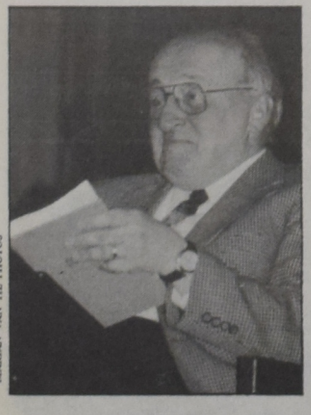
He didn't know. Then it came to him as the Stones sang their famous cry of frustration, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction": "'As the hart pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you, O God....' I 'can't get no satisfaction' until I find it in You."

"It's strange," Mouw added, "that we don't study our own culture, looking for openings, like we do in 'missionary cultures.'"

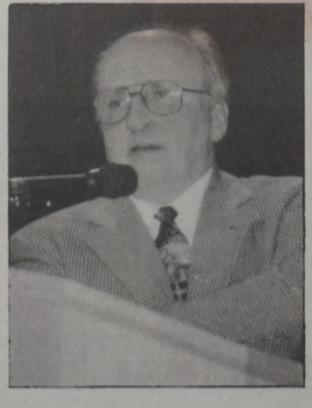
Looking at ourselves

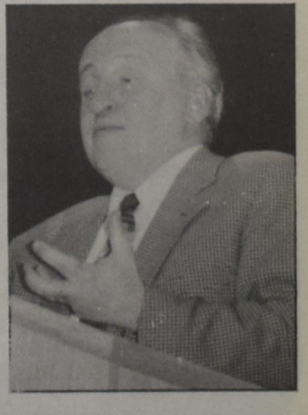
... By engaging in self-examination.

Calvin's good advice to Christian magistrates thinking about going to war (*Institutes*, Bk.4; 20, 11-12) also applies to spiritual warfare. "Don't give vent to your passions." Check out your own motives and con-



MARIAN VAN TIL PHOTOS





template the humanity of the people you are going to attack so that you won't act against them in an unduly severe manner. "We should act 'with suspicion with regard to ourselves, with charity with regard to others.' But that's pretty much the opposite of what we normally do," Mouw asserts.

That applies also to issues like abortion and homosexuality. "We can take the most conservative view, but we need to repent of how we *act*."

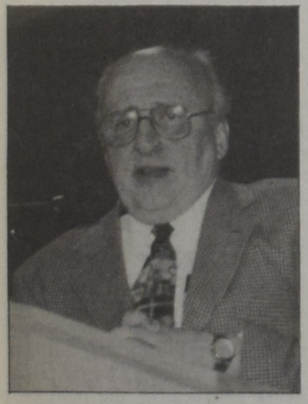
Mouw recounted being asked to be the conservative Protestant representative on a panel that addressed a gay group on what churches are doing about AIDS. They thought they knew what he'd say, that he'd come down hard on them in judgment.

They were surprised into silence when he said, "You know, we're both victims of false advertising. You people aren't gay. You're miserable. And I'm not straight. I'm bent. We're all broken, bent people, whose only hope is to meet together at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ."

Mouw wasn't talking *compromise*. He was talking *civility* which is part of a biblical worldview. He admits there are times when harsh language and rebukes are necessary. But, he notes, "Jesus reserved his most serious, 'uncivil' language for religious leaders who were hypocrites. We have erred so much on the side of incivility that it might not be bad if we erred on the side of civility."

It's steady work

...By cultivating patience.



The Mennonites have a wonderful expression, Mouw says. "They say 'we are living in the time of God's patience.' We are waiting for God to do something about things. It is not our business to rush in the Kingdom, to make it right." By that Mouw doesn't mean that we should eschew public justice and sit around waiting for Christ to return; but we need to be patient.

Using a lighthearted example about cultivating that patience, Mouw tells the story of a Polish rabbi in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw during World War II. One young man was appointed to look for the Messiah. After a year the young man asked the rabbi if he could be relieved of his duties.

Why? the rabbi wanted to know. Because nothing ever happens; it's boring, said the trainee. That may be, answered the rabbi, but at least it's steady work! "We are looking for the Messiah, too," said Mouw. "But we know his name and that he's coming back. Waiting for him is not easy. But at least we have steady work!"

Not our own

...By recognizing where our security lies.

As a young man, Mouw had a teacher who was a pacifist. Mouw would "get into angry arguments with him, pulling out all the just-war arguments." But the man always answered Mouw softly (to Mouw's annoyance).

He saw what truly motivated his teacher when Mouw asked him: If communists would try to kill your wife and children, and you could stop it with violence, would you?

No, said his teacher.

But why not? Mouw wanted to know.

Because killing me and my family is not the worst thing that could happen. Separating me from God would be the worst thing that could happen.

"We are not our own but belong ... to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. We need to know where our security really lies. We don't need to be defeated by the defeats we feel in public life."

Enjoy God in ... theatres

Mouw suggests five ways we can act as "public disciples":

...By acknowledging our public calling as Christians.

The *Westminster Confession* says the chief end of a human being is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." That purpose has a bearing on how we act in parking lots, on highways, in theatres, locker rooms, insurance offices.

...By acknowledging the complex rule of Christ over all of creation.

"The whole universe is really a theocracy: 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.'" What is important is "what we do in that theocracy before the theocratic nature of reality is acknowledged by all people" when Christ's Kingdom comes.

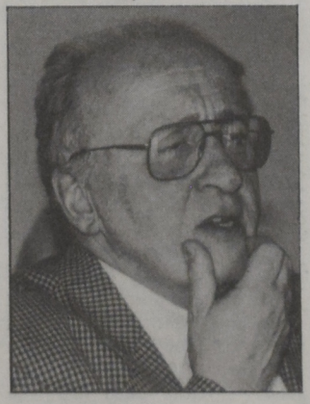
Last, best hope

...By careful, communal study of the complex realities of public life.

"It's very important to support Christian higher education, communities of Christian scholars. And those in such communities must acknowledge the privilege of being within them," Mouw asserts.

A Lutheran scholar, Mark Schwehn in a book called *Exiles from Eden* (Oxford, 1992) says that in the past, universities were sustained by a Christian worldview which was undergirded by practices of worship. With secularization, that worldview is gone, and so are those worship practices. The result is fragmentation in the academic world.

Mouw says, "Universities need to be held together by love, humility and patience. Those qualities are absolutely necessary. We've lost that. The academy is unloving, impatient and arrogant. The only way we can sustain those virtues is by worshipping together [think of all the academic institutions which started out Christian; as they abandoned that communal worship, they also abandoned their Christian values]. We need a spiritual foundation for an academic quest. Christian colleges like Redeemer are really in the avant garde; we're the last, best hope for the academy."



...By exploring public life with empathy.

We need to be compassionate. When we listen to or watch the news we encounter disconnected events. Just as a pastor might encounter birth, marriage, divorce and death in a day and has to embrace all of that complexity, so do we in our daily lives. We have to learn to be part of "an enlarged consciousness."

'Be careful little hands...'

...By learning a Christlike view of reality.

Mouw was in Haiti, traveling through a horrendously poor part of the country. He sat in the back of a vehicle with a couple of Haitian girls who had been adopted by CRC missionaries. The kids started singing the Sunday school song "Oh, Be Careful Little Eyes What You See." Mouw sang along though he disliked the song. He thought, how ironic that they're happily singing "oh, be careful what you see" as we're looking at all this poverty.

He had always figured the song was a downer, a legalistic warning about all the things good Christians shouldn't see, do, hear, say, and so on. But finally he concluded he was the one who put the negative spin on the song. We *need* to be careful what we see: careful to see what Jesus sees, hear what Jesus hears, says what Jesus says, walk where Jesus walks, because, indeed, "the Father up above is looking down in love."

We need to reflect Jesus' kindness, compassion, love. We need Jesus' view of reality. We need to be civil.

'Bowling alone'

Why are we encountering so much incivility in our society? It may be because people are preoccupied with themselves.

Richard Mouw calls attention to American sociologist Robert Putnam's seminal article last year called "Bowling Alone" —drawing serious conclusions, despite the humorous-sounding title. He demonstrated that there is increasing "social disengagement" in North American society. In the U.S., this can be seen in bowling, of all things.

More Americans than ever are bowling, but not in leagues. (More Americans bowled last year than voted!) When you bowl in a league, you stick around afterwards to drink beer, eat pizza. The result is, you socialize with fellow bowlers. But when you bowl alone, you go in, do what you came to do (and presumably enjoy it), and leave.

"Solo bowling" is everywhere. That spirit was observed as early as before 1950 by poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, who wrote that there is "raining from the sky a meteoric shower of facts" but that "there exists no loom to weave them together."

We see that in spades today. Computers give us a universe of information, but "there's no 'inter' on the 'net.'"

"But," Mouw says, "we Christians see that all things *are* held together, and held together in Christ, as Paul tells the Colossians. And when we're in the presence of Jesus Christ, we're at the centre of the universe."

Feature

The wisdom of the poor

Michael R. Geisterfer

I was racing through rush-hour traffic on a hectic October afternoon, trying desperately to make it to the emergency room before Daniel collapsed. He was sitting in the passenger seat beside me, eerily calm, as if he weren't aware of how critical his condition was. He even had a small, twisted smile on his lips as if he were enjoying the ride and looking forward to the attention he'd be receiving at the hospital.

He had phoned me a few hours earlier asking for help in moving some of his belongings out of the boarding house he was living in to a new room in centretown. I hadn't seen him in over three weeks and when I arrived to meet him that afternoon, I was shocked to see how thin he had become. He looked like a concentration camp victim with hollow eyes, sunken cheeks, a fragile whisper of life in sallow skin stretched over bones. He'd been living on the street for the past three weeks and obviously had eaten little during that time.

"Do you want to die?" I asked him incredulously. "Is that why you aren't eating?" I was concerned and admittedly irritated. You can't have someone starving to death on the streets of one of the richest nations in the world. It would be a senseless death, and as a social worker I needed to find some solution to this problem, a solution that at that moment did not appear forthcoming.

You can't have someone starving to death on the streets of one of the richest nations in the world. It would be a senseless death.

He turned to me with wide imploring eyes and said, "No, I don't want to die."

"You don't?" I replied. The forcefulness of my response startled me. His life seemed so miserable to me, I realized that my unspoken thought was that death might be better than this misery. He is the quintessential street person, ragged, unkempt, so unbecoming in appearance that if you met him walking down the street you would probably unconsciously block him out and never remember seeing him. The only reason our paths crossed is because of my profession. I get paid by the province to care about what happens to people like him.

He remained silent in the seat beside me. Perhaps because of the extreme nature of this particular crisis, a stray thought surfaced in my mind. I found myself wondering what it would be like to be him. What does the world look like through his eyes? Allowing my natural curiosity to override my professional diffidence, I decided to momentarily stop being a social worker and ask him a question as one human being to another, as if we were two very distinct travellers who just happened to meet each other on the same road. Like two souls, comparing notes.

"Are you enjoying your life?" I asked.

"I am," he replied without hesitation.

"What do you like about it?"

His eyes grew wide and began to sparkle. "I like my friends," he said, "I like going to the drop-in centre on Friel Street and playing cards with Tim and Jerry. I like walking down the street in the summertime and seeing the people in the market. You can smell the flowers from the corner by the bookstore." He continued recounting the things he liked about living. As he did so, his voice grew animated, like that of a child evoking wonderment at the many things there are to like about life. He told me about how, once, someone had given him money and taken him on a trip to Canada's Wonderland. "I *really* liked that," he said breaking into a wide smile.

"Don't you get scared sometimes?" He looked at me blankly so I coaxed him: "Don't you sometimes wonder where your next meal is coming from?"

"Never," he replied. "When I get real hungry I just go down to the Shepherds of Good Hope and they give me a meal."

"Then how come you're so skinny? You are starving to death."

He dropped his eyes self-consciously, apologetically. "I just forget to eat sometimes."

"But doesn't that scare you? You could die." We were back where we started, but he just laughed.

"I won't die," he said, shaking his head and exuding supreme confidence, as if he knew something I didn't. "You came for me, didn't you?"

"That was a fluke," I replied, but he just smiled and shook his scraggly head.

"At the hospital they are going to give me Ensure (a nutritional supplement), as much as I want," and he threw his arms out as if demonstrating just how much Ensure they were going to give him. He was right, too. We arrived at the hospital, the doctor took one look at him, then wrote out a prescription for an unlimited supply of that expensive meal supplement. "What did I tell you?" he said as we walked out of the hospital.

That afternoon I helped him find a place to live in a rundown tenement house in a poor section of town. We went to a nearby pharmacy to collect his first few cartons of Ensure, about fifty dollars worth. I watched him negotiate the flavors with the head pharmacist — two boxes each of strawberry and vanilla, one box of chocolate. If I acknowledged my feelings, I would have to admit that what I felt towards him was no longer the pity and irritation that I had felt a few hours earlier, but rather, an awakening sense of respect for him as a human being. If I met him on the street now, I would want to help him.

There are many things in this world I don't understand. Poverty is one of them. I have seen too much of it in my lifetime as a social worker and journalist to know that there are no easy answers. I never fully understood what Jesus meant when he said, "The poor you will always have with you," unless of course he was stating a simple fact. The poor will always be among us. No matter how advanced our technology, no matter how rich we become, we will never solve the problem of the poor. This may be a good thing.

As Daniel and I walked back to his tenement house, our arms laden with the boxes of Ensure, I saw very clearly the simple wisdom of Jesus' statement. Daniel is not a problem to be solved, not an academic principle to be expounded upon in theological circles, not a statistical aberration for social service planners to mull over, but a human being struggling to get through life, just like the rest of us. As one human being to another, he taught me something that day.

You really can smell the flowers in the market from the bookstore on the corner. I tried it the next time I went down there, and I'm not exactly sure why it is, but the smell of fresh flowers at any time of the year, and the sight of people going about their business on a bright fall morning brings a strange lightness to my heart. A sort of joy.

No one has ever asked me, but if they ever do, I'll tell them that some of the things I like about living are walking along a musty forest trail in Gatineau Park, or coming home from work and hearing the delighted cries of, "Daddy!" as my three young children rush towards me.

That, and the afternoon I spent with Daniel.

Michael Geisterfer is a writer and social worker who lives in Aylmer, Quebec.

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Advice

Peter and Marja are IN

Does a common-law relationship fit with faith?

Dear P & M:

We have a young couple in our church who are living together common-law. They are the parents of one child. The young woman is a confessing member of the Christian Reformed Church and basically grew up in the church. The young man was originally from another denomination but recently made public profession of faith in the CRC. They had their toddler baptized in the same service. They hope to be married sometime in the future.

Many in the congregation think marriage ought to have come first, or at least immediately after committing their lives to the Lord. Others in the congregation, including the pastor and the majority of council, think as long as the couple are committed to each other that this is as good as marriage and we must not judge their lifestyle. In fact, most in the church neighborhood are living common-law and if the church stands in judgment, how can it be a witness to these people and bring them into the church?

Can a couple profess Jesus is Lord of their lives and still continue to live together without the solemnization of marriage? How much compassion and tolerance should one have? May a Christian compromise? Where does obedience to the Word come in?

Dear Questioning Council's Wisdom:

We are also surprised at this sequence of events. There must be a particular circumstance that makes sense to your pastor and the council which would explain their decision. Perhaps there's a previous divorce that has not been finalized. Perhaps the couple is ready to say Yes to the Lord even though the laws of the land are forcing them to wait before they can legally say Yes to each other. In such an instance, where a child is also present, it is possible to profess Jesus as Lord while continuing to live together without the solemnization of marriage.

How much tolerance should we have? This depends on who we're dealing with. We deal differently with situations that have developed *outside* the church than we do with situations that begin to develop *inside* the church. In this instance your pastor and council may be moving a couple gently and gradually towards the goal that you also have in mind, namely, marriage.

May a Christian compromise? Of course not. We continue to uphold marriage as the norm. But a community-minded church has to be willing to walk others through the stages of spiritual growth. We can't expect babes in the Lord to have it all together immediately. They will crawl, fall, totter, fall, walk, fall and finally run. We don't know the situation, but we will assume that your pastor and council are holding marriage up as the goal and that they are patiently helping this couple along.

Obedience to the Word applies to all of us. This couple may be making bigger steps of repentance and leaps of obedience than some of us may have made recently. Let's compare them to where they were before, not where we want them to be right now. Let's also honestly admit that all of us have areas of our lives where Jesus' lordship is not fully acknowledged.

Since you question both the wisdom and even the standards of your leadership, we urge you to talk to your pastor if you haven't done so already. You need to know whether there are mitigating circumstances that explain the couple's decision to delay the marriage. Your pastor may not break confidentiality, but he may be able to reassure you in a general way that his goals for this couple are identical to yours but that special circumstances require them to follow this unusual sequence.

It may interest you to know about a case regarding a woman living common-law that was discussed by a classis and then by synod. Back in 1976 the Clinton, Ont., consistory refused to permit the Vanastra steering committee to interview a woman for profession of faith because she was living in a common-law relationship. She had lived in this relationship for 13 years, had five children and had asked her mate to marry her. He would not.

Classis Huron said that she could become a communicant member despite remaining in this relationship. Five members of the Clinton CRC then appealed to synod, insisting that a common-law relationship and communicant membership are incompatible in the CRC. Synod 1977 disagreed with that argument, stating: "Either to disrupt her family or to forego membership in the church would be disobedient to the Lord." It also added this recommendation: "This decision should not be interpreted as applying to all similar cases nor as an approval or endorsement of common-law relationships in general. In other words, the consistory of Clinton is advised to remind itself that in pastoral practice each case has to be considered on its own merits."

We hope and trust that your council's decision regarding the young couple in question was also "considered on its own merits" and in no way "endorses common-law relationships in general."

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

A new youth movement takes form

Tony Campolo

If the Mormons can get their young people to give two years of their lives in missionary service, then why can't we evangelicals get our young people to give at least one year?

I have been asking that question from one end of the country to the other. The responses have been surprising. Young people have stood up and said we are willing and ready, but nobody has ever asked us. Everywhere I go on college campuses I find young people who are telling me they are ready to set aside a year (some of them are willing to give two years) to a church-based ministry in which they will have an opportunity to do evangelism and social ministry.

The program that I have proposed to them involves a weekly schedule that looks like this:

1. Twenty hours a week in door to door evangelism.
2. Ten hours a week in social ministry, probably tutoring in a local high school or working with the homeless.
3. Ten hours of ministry in a neighborhood church (leading a youth group, teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir).

A well-developed theology

After a year of this kind of work, I know that we would have young men and women who would know their Bibles and have a well-developed theology. As they go door to door, they will be asked questions and driven back to the studying of their Bibles in order to come up with answers. In their discussions with people they will have to develop a theology in order to make sense out of the faith they are trying to communicate.

When Jesus sent out the 70 they were not well equipped, but in the context of their missionary work they found that the Holy Spirit put words in their mouths and they learned the Word of God, and developed a theology in the process of witnessing for Jesus. The same will hold true for young people today.

When I talk to pastors about the prospect of such an army of volunteer workers their eyes light up. Pastors of struggling inner city congregations are thrilled at the prospect of having a team of young people working out of their churches going door to door with the Word of God, bringing people into the church for Bible studies, conducting social ministries in the neighborhood and generating new youth ministries in their churches.

It should be noted that the Mormons now have the fastest growing religion in America and they have done it almost solely on the basis of young people who are serving as missionaries. I contend we can do better than they can, given the truth of the gospel that our young people will be carrying in the world.

Reciprocal blessings

Finally, consider what these young people will bring back to their churches. They will have vision, they will have experiences, they will have a taste of the excitement of having won people to Christ. Undoubtedly, their local churches will be brought to a new level of spiritual excitement when these young people rejoin them.

This vision is not one of those "wouldn't it be nice" sort of things. This is a vision that is already drawing people together in order to make it a reality. Hundreds of young people have already given me their names and addresses, expressing their desire to be a part of this movement. There are folks out there who are making financial contributions in order to get behind this effort. Television evangelism is good. Contemporary church worship is enticing. But nothing beats obeying the Lord's Great Commission!

We are not going to reach this generation for Christ unless people go door to door with the message of the gospel. We have young people who are ready to do that. It is up to the rest of us to get behind them in prayer and support and make this happen. I can't think of any better way to revitalize the church and bring revival in North America than this 2,000-year-old plan. We have been looking for short cuts, but there is no substitute to knocking on doors. If you want to give or get involved, give a call to the hotline for this ministry at (610) 341-1722.

Tony Campolo is a well-known author and speaker and the president of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, which has its head office in St. Davids, Pennsylvania.

Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

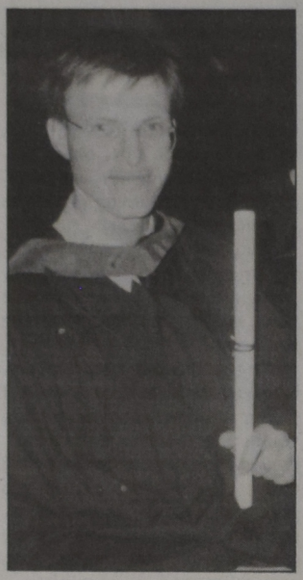
We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Interested in placing an ad?

Get in touch with us for details.

Graduation



Warm congratulations to
WILLIAM GERALD LAMMERS
for obtaining his ARCT piano performance diploma on a cold winter day at the Royal Conservatory of Music Convocation held at the Ford Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto, Ont., Jan. 19, 1997.
William, besides being an accomplished musician, is also a dedicated science teacher at Smithville Chr. High School, Smithville, Ont. He resides in Grimsby, Ont.
Best wishes for the future from family, friends and students.
Proud parents, Henry and Leny Lammers, St. Catharines, Ont.

Birthdays

AALBERS:
On Feb. 10, 1997, we hope to celebrate the 80th birthday of our dear mother
GESINA AALBERS
(nee TER HAAR)
May God grant her good health and happiness in years to come. Love and best wishes from her children:
Lisa & Ed Semplonius
Linda & Henk Timmerman
Gerhard & Rita Aalbers
and 11 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.
An open house will be held on Feb. 8, 1997, at Providence Place, 300 Glen Hill Drive, Whitby, Ont., from 2-4 p.m.

For Sale

Landscaping business for sale on central **Vancouver Island**.
Year-round work for 2-3 people with room for growth. Terms and transition negotiable.
Call 1-250-746-4063

Anniversaries

Overschie the Neth. Stoney Creek Ont.
1947 February 12 1997
"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).
ADRIAN and MARIA VAN DYK
(nee HOOGERBRUGGE)
together with their family, invite you to share with them the joyous celebration of 50 years of marriage. We are thankful for the love and care that you share so generously with your family and friends.
We thank the Lord that He has greatly blessed you, walked with you on your life's journey, and given you comfort and strength when you needed it. May God continue to keep you in His care.
Love from:
Bill & Diana Zylstra-Wassink — Sarnia, Ont.
Michael & Rachel (Trent), David, Robyn
Arlin, Chad, Manuel, Ruella, Junita Dreise
Jack & Wendy Van Dyk — Millgrove, Ont.
Joshua, Justin, Jason, Leah
Corinne & John Bosch — Grimsby, Ont.
Erin, Crystal, Laura
Jacoline & Donald Aasman — Ancaster, Ont.
Daniel, Jessica, Thomas, Benjamin
We remember with love Anne Zylstra, taken from us into glory on May 8, 1994.
Relatives and friends are invited to celebrate with us at an open house on Saturday, Feb. 15, 1997, from 2-4 p.m., D.V., in the Fruitland Chr. Ref. Church, Fellowship Hall. Best wishes only please.
Home address: 55 Mountain Avenue N., Stoney Creek, ON L8G 3N6; Phone (905) 662-4491.

For Rent

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available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call
(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.

APARTMENTS: Redeemer College has **2- and 4-bedroom, furnished apartments available.** Can be rented daily, weekly or monthly at reasonable rates. No lease required. Please call **(905) 648-2131, ext. 260 or 290.**

Birthdays

Congratulations to Grace Wilms on the occasion of her 90th birthday!

GRACE WILMS
(GRIETJE VRIEND)
celebrates her 90th birthday on Feb. 1, 1997.
Her husband, John, and seven children, 31 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren thank the Lord for her good health and pray for continued blessings for her.
Address: 364 Angeline St. N., R.R.#1, Lindsay, ON K9V 4R1

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Abe Bakker on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!

Personal

Chr. man, 63 years old, would like to correspond with Chr. lady, 58-65, for possible future relationship. N.W. of Kitchener, Ont. Please send letter and phone no. to **File #2659, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Bachelor, 32 years old, would like to correspond with Chr. lady of same age for possible future relationship. Southern Ontario. Please send letters to **File #2658, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.
Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Anniversaries

50th Anniversary
February 13, 1997

The children of
MR. and MRS. ABE BAKKER
invite you to an open house at 157 Main St., Wellington, Ont., on Feb. 15, 1997, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Best wishes only please.

Classifieds

Obituaries

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations" (Ps. 90:1).
The Lord in His wisdom called unto Himself

HENRIETTA HIELEMA
(nee BOONSTRA)

on Thursday, Jan. 16, 1997, in her 88th year.
She was predeceased by her husband, Pieter Hielema, on July 31, 1993, and by her 10 brothers and sisters.
Dear mother and mother-in-law of:
Jack & Dorothy Hielema — Cayuga
Fred & Margaret Hielema — Jarvis
Ralph & Gertie Hielema — Orangeville
Susan & Cor Rauwerda — Jordan Station
Nancy & Bob Lenos — Jarvis
Emma & Henry Winter — Beamsville
Harry & Kathy Hielema — Thorold
Pete & Pat Hielema — Jarvis
Loving Oma of 31 grandchildren and 55 great-grandchildren.
The funeral service was held in the Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church in Jarvis, Ont., on Jan. 20, 1997, Pastor R. Praamsma officiated.
Correspondence address:
Emma Winter, P.O. Box 844, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

On New Year's Day 1997, the Lord took home our dear sister, sister-in-law, aunt and stepmother

WYKE NIENHUIS
(nee VANDER VEEN)

Widow of Anco Nienhuis since 1968.
Romans 8: 1, 2.
We pray for God's comfort, also for her many stepchildren, whom she so lovingly cared for after their arrival from Vietnam in 1979.
Klaas Vander Veen — Orillia, Ont.
Jane Grasman-Vander Veen — Brampton, Ont.
Aukje & Haaye van der Veen — Leeuwarden, the Neth.
Jan & Dora van der Veen — Leeuwarden, the Neth.
Sid & Tina Vander Veen — San Jose, Calif.
Jack & Catherine Vander Veen — Brantford, Ont.
Her nephews and nieces and her stepchildren and grandchildren.
Correspondence address:
Mr. Allen Vander Veen, 12 Victoria Terrace, Brampton, ON L6V 1L9

GIVE SOMEONE A SECOND CHANCE.
Discuss organ donation with your family and sign a donor card today.
THE KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Teachers

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Due to increased enrolment, **Knox Chr. School** invites applications for **two primary teaching positions** for the 1997-98 school year. Due to an anticipated maternity leave, we also require a senior kindergarten teacher for the 97-98 school year only. If you would like to become part of a dynamic, growing school of over 300 students in a modern, well-equipped facility within a park-like semi-rural setting, forward your letter of application and resume to the principal:

Bill Helmus
Knox Chr. School
410 Scugog Street
Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2
Phone: (905) 623-5871
Fax: (905) 623-8877

BURNS LAKE, B.C.: Burns Lake Chr. School requires a **teacher/principal** to commence Sept. 1997. Please send your resume with your statement of faith and philosophy of Chr. education to:

Robert Duiker, Principal
Burns Lake Chr. School
P.O. Box 574,Burns Lake, BC
V0J 1E0

FRUITLAND, Ont.: John Knox Memorial Chr. School invites applications for an **interim music teacher**. This position is 50% part-time and involves teaching music to grades 4-8 on a rotary schedule. A qualified candidate will be hired as soon as possible. Interested teachers should contact:

Mr. Julius de Jager, Principal
at (905) 643-2460
for additional information and application forms.

LINDSAY, Ont.: Heritage Chr. School has a possible opening for a Principal. Personal commitment to Christ and provincial certification or equivalent are essential. Interdenominational school with 170 students in a town of 18,000. 60% teaching, 40% administration. Currently paying 90% of OACS/OCSTA grid plus 20% bonus, plus full payment of CSI basic health plan and 4% pension. Please reply to:

Bob Moore, Principal
159 Colborne St. W.
Lindsay, ON K9V 5Z8
or call (705) 324-8363

Send your questions to

Peter and Marja

Confidentiality is assured.

Miscellaneous

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Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls accepted:
— to Kentville, N.S., **Rev. Norman J. Visser** of Colton, S.D.

Change in times of services:
— **First CRC of Red Deer**, Alta., will now hold their afternoon worship at 4:30 p.m.

Annual Day of Prayer — Wednesday, March 12, 1997:
— Synod has designated Wednesday, **March 12, 1997**, as a Day of Prayer. All congregations are requested to assemble to ask for God's blessing upon the world, for our nations, for crops and industry, and for his church. Let us pray in faith and respond to his favor in grateful obedience.
Councils are reminded that "those churches which judge that the observance of the Annual Day of Prayer can be more meaningful for them if it is observed in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer (U.S.A.) have the right to change the date of service" (Acts of Synod 1996, p. 578). The National Day of Prayer (U.S.A.) is May 1, 1997.
David H. Engelhard,
General Secretary.

Attention: All churches Please inform us of important changes. Items under "Church News" will be included free of charge.

Look for our CALENDAR of EVENTS on page 19...

Teachers

Langley Christian Schools

Enrolment increases and the addition of Grade 11 means positions will be available for the 1997-98 school year. Applicants need to send a resume, statement of educational philosophy, and teaching evaluation reports. Eligibility for a BC Teaching Certificate is required.

Elementary Campus (K-5)
* Primary & Intermediate Openings
* Music (80%) and French (20%) Teacher
(Qualifications in Phys Ed and/or Special Ed would be added asset at Intermediate level.)

Middle School (6-8)
Possible Opening for Teacher at Grade 7/8
(Qualifications in French an asset.)

High School Campus
(3 or 4 Teaching Positions)
* Computer Science Teacher
* French
* Career and Personal Planning
(Applicants also need to be able to teach one or two of the following: Bible, Drama, Math, Business, English, Socials or Science.)

Send applications to the Principals:

Leo Smit or **Peter Van Huizen**
(Elementary) **(Middle/High)**
21789-50th Avenue **22702-48 Avenue**
Langley, BC V3A 3T2 **Langley, BC V2Z 2T6**
Phone: (604) 533-2222 **Phone: (604) 533-0842**
Fax: (604) 533-7276 **Fax: (604) 533-0842**

Chemistry/Physics teacher needed

Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from **chemistry/physics specialists** who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins **August 1, 1997.** Send applications to **Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com**

Job Opportunities

SEEKING A PASTOR

Horizon Community Church, a new CRC ministry of 100 families, is seeking a pastor. The church is located in the thriving suburban community of Highlands Ranch, a part of the **Denver Metropolitan area**. Key to the church's program is Bible-based dynamic preaching, enthusiastic worship, and sharing of the gospel in active outreach to a suburban community. Essential to the church's development is continued facilitation of the merging of two congregations and leadership for staff ministry. Please send inquiries and/or resumes to the **Search Committee, Horizon Community Church, 7140 S. Colorado Blvd., Littleton, CO 80122.**

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Social Service Work - Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties, **invites applications for the position of Child Care Worker.** The responsibilities of this live-in position include involvement in educational programming, scheduling daily routines, and child supervision, within a family structured environment. Position includes salary and benefits package. Please submit resume to **Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, P.O. Box 397, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 or call (905) 892-4332.**

Miscellaneous

Job Opportunities

CALVIN
College

The Calvin College Education Department seeks candidates for a tenure-track position which involves teaching psychology of education and introduction to teaching as well as the possibility of one of the following: 1) teaching secondary methods and curriculum courses in one of the disciplines; 2) special education and/or learning disabilities; 3) teaching elementary religion studies methods; and 4) teaching/advising in the graduate program.

Qualifications include: 1) an earned doctorate (or ABD) in a field related to psychology of education and/or curriculum and instruction; 2) secondary teaching experience; 3) course work and/or experience in a secondary school subject discipline; 4) a scholarship agenda; and 5) commitment to a Reformed Christian expression of faith.

Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed Christian tradition and is an equal opportunity employer. The College encourages the application of women and minority candidates. Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum vitae to: Dr. L. Stegink, Department Chair, Education Department, Calvin College, 3201 Burton St. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546, by February 1, 1997.

Miscellaneous

Financial Assistance

Those persons from congregations in **Classis Niagara** who are planning to or are presently studying for full-time ministry in the CRC as a pastor and/or evangelist and who are in need of financial assistance for the 1997-1998 academic year are invited to contact the secretary of the **Student Fund Committee — Louie VanderBerg, 1662 Second Ave., R.R. #3, St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P9, Fax (905) 641-4624.** Application form deadline is **March 31, 1997.**

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Pauline Schuringa at (905) 457-6715
201 County Court Blvd., Suite 500, Brampton, ON L6W 4L2

Support Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)

Make a donation for 1997!

Reformed Faith Witness, the new publisher of *Christian Courier*, is a newly formed charitable organization which received tax exempt status and its own registration number from Revenue Canada on Nov. 20, 1996 (see story in Dec. 6, 1996, issue of *Christian Courier*).
Please consider making a financial gift early in (and for) 1997. All contributions will be used to help *Christian Courier* and the cause of Reformed Christian journalism. Send your cheque and complete the coupon below and we will issue an official receipt.

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To: REFORMED FAITH WITNESS
4-261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Registration No. 1092873-47

❑ Yes, please enter my/our name on your mailing list and keep me/us informed about Reformed Faith Witness.

❑ I/we enclose a donation payable to Reformed Faith Witness. Please send receipt.

Name: _____ **Amount:** _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ **Code:** _____

P.S.: CC subscription and advertising payments are not tax deductible, but you are free to send an extra amount as a donation to RFW. Please note: Only amounts $10 or over which are clearly designated to Reformed Faith Witness will be officially receipted.

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"Free Hallelujah!"

Service commemorating the **50th anniversary** of the liberation of the Netherlands, held May 7, 1995, in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, Ont. Featuring **Dr. Remkes Kooistra's** re-delivery of the sermon originally preached in Siegerswoude, Friesland, the Neth.,on April 15, 1945. Also participating: Ottawa's Citadel Salvation Army Band, three choirs, etc. To order this two-hours VHS (NTSC) video, send **$34.95** (incl. tax, S&H), by cheque/money order to **Bevmor Video Productions, 31 Carmichael Court, Kanata, ON K2K 1K1; Phone (613) 591-0722.**

Miscellaneous

REDEEMER COLLEGE

Counselling Course

"Strategic Pastoral Counselling" will be offered on Thursday afternoons from Feb. 6 to Mar. 13 (3-5 p.m.) by Dr. David G. Benner.

This course is recommended for pastors, elders and laypersons who have counselling ministries (no prerequisite required). It introduces a short-term model of counselling that addresses some of the concerns and obstacles cited by those involved in such work.

Dr. Benner is a clinical and consulting psychologist, author and Professor of Psychology at Redeemer College. His educational background includes an Honours BA from McMaster University, an MA and PhD in clinical psychology from York University and post-doctoral studies at the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis. He has authored or edited 15 books and numerous articles in professional journals and has lectured and offered consulting services throughout North America, Africa and Europe.

For more information on this or other courses being offered at Redeemer, call the Office of Admissions at

1-800-263-6467.

REDEEMER COLLEGE - 777 HWY. 53 E., ANCASTER, ON, L9K 1J4

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Over $4 million in RRSP contributions are invested in a second mortgage on the new campus. Supporter-based financing is the key to managing our debt!

For more information or forms, contact Mr. John Rhebergen.

THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
9125 - 50 St., Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3
(403) 465-3500; FAX (403) 465-3534
E-mail: jrheberg@kingsU.ab.ca
Web: www.kingsU.ab.ca/~jhr/vpadmin.htm

BETHESDA, a non-profit Christian organization, which provides support to people who have developmental disabilities, requires a

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

As a Human Resources Manager you will be responsible for various aspects of the human relations function. You will possess outstanding organizational, leadership and communication skills. The successful applicant will be a seasoned professional with a relevant university degree and a CHRP designation. A Social Services background is a definite asset. Competitive salary and benefit package offered.

Please apply in writing, no later than Feb. 7, 1997, to:
Executive Director, Bethesda Programs
235 Martindale Road, Unit 11, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A5

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Feb. 4-12 CSS's Harry Houtman in Alberta.

Jan.31-Feb.1 Official opening and dedication of CLAC's new office building in **Grimsby,** Ont. Location: Christie St., west on S. Service Rd., Grimsby, Ont. Jan. 31: Opening ceremony 4-4:30 p.m., open house to follow. Feb. 1: open house 12 noon-3 p.m. Info.: 1-800-463-2522.

Feb. 1 Concert by the "St. Thomas District Male Choir," 7:30 p.m., Westmount CRC, **Strathroy,** Ont. Soloist: John de Jager (tenor). Tickets $10, $8 sen./students. Proceeds: Strathroy Food Bank.

Feb. 4 Annual "Ministers' Conference," for pastors and their spouses, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Guest speaker: Dr. Wilbert Shenk on "Envisioning the Church of the Future." Call (905) 648-2131 to register (#).

Feb. 4 The 1997 annual "Church & the Law Seminar," hosted by the Orangeville law firm of Wardlaw, Mullin, Carter & Thwaites in conjunction with the Can. Council of Christian charities. From 8:45 a.m. through 3:45 p.m., in Toronto at the Queensway Cathedral, 1536 The Queensway, **Etobicoke,** Ont. Guest speakers include Prof. M.H. Ogilvie (Carleton University) and lawyer George Grange (Washington, D.C.). The seminar is designed for pastors, church leaders and Christian charities to provide information on current legal issues. Pre-register by Jan. 28, 1997, at $5 per person, by contacting the CCCC at (519) 669-5137 or fax (519) 669-3291.

Feb. 8 Organ concert by Dr. Christiaan Teeuwsen, 8 p.m., Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster,** Ont. Works by Bruhns, Sweelinck, Fischer, Buxtehude and Bach. Admission: $10/$8 Sen./Stu. Info.: (905) 648-2131 (#)

Feb. 8 "Salem Benefit Concert," an evening of celebration and worship for the whole family with Colleen and Grace, 7 p.m., Ancaster CRC (70 Hwy. 53 East), Ancaster, Ont. Suggested donation: $10/adult, $30/family (#).

Feb. 15 Leader Link presents "A Winter Oasis — streams in the desert," a day of spiritual renewal for Christian Women in Leadership. From 8:45 a.m. to 8 p.m. Info.: Mrs. Krista Hewitt, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, (905) 479-5885, fax (905) 479-4742 (#).

Feb. 21-22 Marriage Preparation Seminar, First CRC, 287 Water St., **Guelph,** Ont. Info./registration: (519) 822-7720, fax (519) 822-4446.

Feb.21-Mar.1 Students of London District Chr. Secondary School, **London,** Ont., present the play OLIVEr. At 8 p.m. on Feb. 21, 22, 28 and Mar. 1. Info.: (519) 455-4360.

Feb. 22 Alberta convention of the Christian Heritage Party, 9:15 a.m., Sandman Inn, **Lethbridge,** Alta. Info.: Nellie Slingerland (403) 345-3205 or Cor Labots (403) 479-5147. E-mail: clabots@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca.

March 7 "Spread the Good News," inspirational evening featuring former Argo and Ti-Cat running back Derrick McAdoo, Rev. David Feddes, The Immigrants, Hans Schouls and the HDCH Praise Team. At 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. A Back to God Hour presentation: no admission, but an offering for Russian ministry. Info.: (905) 332-5970.

March 7-8 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Een beeld van 'n man," a 3-act comedy, 8 p.m., Market Square Theatre, **Woodstock,** Ont. Tickets: Adrian Rodenburg, (519) 283-6285 (#).

to March 13 "Strategic Pastoral Counselling" course will be offered on Thursday afternoons by Dr. David G. Benner, Professor of Psychology at Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Recommended for pastors, elders and laypersons involved in counselling ministries. From 3-5 p.m. on Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, March 6 and 13. Info. 1-800-263-6467 (#).

March 21-22 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre group presents "Een beeld van 'n man," a 3-act comedy, 8 p.m., Dutch Canadian Club Hall, **London,** Ont. Tickets: Adrian Rodenburg (519) 283-6285 (#).

April 5 The Eighth Coffee Break/Story Hour Inspirational Rally, 9-4:30 p.m., Park Bible Church, **Burlington,** Ont. Registration starts 8 a.m., Theme: "Fear Not, God Upholds You." Main speaker: Betty Veldman. Info.: Ellen Hessels, (905) 457-7490.

April 5, 12 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Een beeld van 'n man," a 3-act comedy. **Apr. 5:** 8 p.m., **Peterborough,** Ont. Tickets: Frank Meevis, (705) 799-6919. **Apr. 12:** 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, **Clinton,** Ont. Tickets: Sue Guetter, (519) 482-9257 (#).

Job Opportunities

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
CRWRC

DEVELOPMENT WORKERS NEEDED

Considering a new or different career? CRWRC is seeking individuals with a career interest in serving in community development overseas. Our two-year Service and Training program currently has a number of openings for persons interested in living and working in a developing country. Essential qualifications are strong interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, a related college or university degree, or equivalent work experience. For some locations, fluency in French is an asset. Contact:

Wayne deJong or Jacob Kramer
800-730-3490 or 905-336-2920
to submit your application before March 1, 1997

Events

ORGAN CONCERT

Dr. Christiaan Teeuwsen will present an Organ Concert at Redeeemer College Auditorium on February 8, at 8 p.m.
Featured works are by Bruhns, Sweelinck, Dances from the 16th century *Susanna vanSoldt Manuscript,* Fischer, Buxtehude and Bach. Admission: $10/$8 Sen./Stu.

Redeemer College
777 Hwy. 53 E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4

Leader Link

presents

"A Winter Oasis — streams in the desert"

A day of spiritual renewal for
Christian Women in Leadership
Saturday, February 15, 1997
8:45 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
For details call:
Mrs. Krista Hewitt
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
Phone: (905) 479-5885
Fax: (905) 479-4742

Up the Mekong River: a day's journey with a development worker in Cambodia

Mike Fennema

Wake up! It is already 5:30 a.m. If you want breakfast, make it quick because we don't want to be late and get lousy seats. At 6:00 we take a ride on the back of a motorbike up to the river's edge, already a hive of activity

MIKE FENNEMA PHOTOS

Cambodian children

as the boat is loaded. We fight for tickets and then find our seats. The boat is full, but there is always room for one more, and one more, and one more.

We're lucky, no pigs or chickens on this boat to escort us. The seats are clean — even the floor has no garbage strewn about. At least not yet. The video machine at the front of the boat sends out a barely audible sound. The actors' lips move to a different beat, sometimes Chinese (Jackie Chan), sometimes English ("Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom"), but the words come out in Khmer. At each stop hordes of children and women rush onto the boat for a frenzied few moments trying to sell a bottle of water or Coke, a bag of sugar cane, rice, chicken, bread, fruit or a pack of gum. As the motor revs up, they scurry away, leaping back onto the pier as the boat pushes off.

Karaoke and beer

The eroded sides of the Mekong River are hidden from view due to the high water. Banana, coconut, palm and other fruit and timber trees outline the shore. Near each stop there are wooden houses on tall stilts. Attached to the back, jutting out above the river, are small square rooms with walls three feet high; the floors have small holes in them: Can you guess the purpose of these special rooms?

Two o'clock and we've arrived at our destination, Kratie town. In town, the night has a life of its own. As the sun goes down, year-round Christmas lights come on and the volume of the music is cranked up. Young men on motorbikes cruise by deciding which of the seven restaurants or the many karaoke bars to patronize. As we sit at our table outside the restaurant under the coconut tree enjoying our beef stew and rice, a commotion starts up inside.

We hear an angry male voice and then the high-pitched voice of a young beer girl (each beer company hires girls to sell their beer, specifically) as she tries to calm down a customer. Someone flashes a gun, a sign of authority and power. We learn later that the customer was drunk and had asked the beer girl to sing karaoke with him. She had misunderstood him and he was angry. Eventually, the man drove off on his motorbike without further incident.

Not for the faint of heart or body

Wake up again! Today we will be travelling around a nearby village to see the damage caused by the recent floods that submerged some low-lying areas for two weeks or more. The flood waters have now gone down and people are putting their lives back together. The first leg of our journey is 20 km by motorbike. That's the easy part.

Cover your body with sunscreen and your head with a *krama* (hat) for the seven kilometre treck through mostly uninhabited jungle, interspersed with rice fields in the lowlands. Don't expect to stay clean and dry on this trip. Dry the sweat off your brow, roll up your pant legs and pull off your sandals for those times when the road becomes a mud-bottomed lake or gravel-laced river bed.

Tath Rien is our guide. He takes us to his own home in the village. Its walls are made of wooden planks, half the floor is a raised platform made of bamboo, the other half merely mud. Sunlight gulps through the holes in the thatched roof. This is home to Tath, his wife, seven of their children (two are already married), and his grandfather, 86-year-old Ta. Ta and grandson are sitting on the bamboo-slatted floor weaving a collar which will hold a bell around a cow's neck. Ta's body is a wrinkled mass, his thin backbones protruding at an awkward angle. But on his hollowed-out and toothless face there is a radiant smile.

Two-year-old Channi's eyes light up as she catches her father carrying loaves of French bread. A special treat. The dog thinks so too and when no one is looking he snatches the bread from the grasp of the naked little girl and slinks off to devour it.

"Before we show you around the village rice fields, you need to eat and rest for a while; it has been a long, hot walk," Tath says. We eat rice with canned

A Cambodian boy.

fish — sardines, canned in Canada and donated to Cambodia. I have never eaten these in Canada.

Our meal is finished, but we'll have no siesta today. We have too much to see and a long trip home as well. The rice fields lie between one and five kilometres from the village. Mong farmers (a tribal group that makes up part of the village) build a temporary shelter and stay in the fields throughout the rainy season, coming back to the village for the dry season.

As we walk along, we notice that the fields are almost dry again — too dry already. It is now hard to imagine what the flooded fields must have looked like. Here and there are evidences of the previously high water level. Imagine what went through the minds of the farmers as for two weeks they looked out over their once green and lush fields, once full of the hope of a good harvest. Instead, they saw only an ocean of water, their future food supply decreasing with each day that the flood lasted.

A shaky future

From a distance, the fields look lush and green again. But a closer look reveals that most of the stems are dried and yellow. The yield will be only 10 per cent of normal. Some fields were at the flowering stage when the floods came, and now the heads have come out but they have no grain on them. Other fields are totally blackened already. These the farmers have plowed under and are attempting to replant while praying for an extension of the rains.

In the corner of one field stands a tray with incense sticks burning to appease the gods to send a good harvest. Tath Rien informs us that 214 hectares of rice had been planted by the village. One hundred and fifty hectares had been destroyed by the flooding and another 30 hectares were damaged. Thirty-five families had agreed to borrow rice, but the rest of the families in the village were afraid to borrow because they had no confidence in being able to repay, since they had no opportunity to grow rice any more this year. How will they cope? Where will the food come from this year? Where will the energy come from to plant next year's crop if there is no food this year to sustain their families?

My mind fills with questions.

You can write to Mike Fennema at: P.O. Box 1175, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia.

Cambodia was chosen as a priority field for Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) due to its intense need and a new openness to allowing Christian organizations to carry out development work. Mike Fennema is helping to train village leaders in Cambodia who can assist with agriculture and income-earning programs for those most in need.

News Digest

Canada announces new adoption rules

OTTAWA — This month, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Lucienne Robillard announced new measures related to international adoption.

The proposed amendment would require that the central authorities for adoption in the province of destination and in the child's country of origin mutually agree to an adoptive child's placement, and that immigration requirements are met before a visa officer may issue an immigrant visa.

The amendment is part of the process in allowing Canada to comply with the terms of *The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.* The Convention also requires that the child's country of destination decide that the child will be allowed to live in that country permanently before the adoption can be completed.

The government expects the new regulations to come into effect April 1. Adoptions currently in progress will not be affected.

Blue Jays sign teenager for $1.1 million

DUNEDIN, Fla. — As the salaries of major league sports players continue to skyrocket, the Toronto Blue Jays have upped the ante by signing a Dominican teenager for $1.1 million.

Although Josephang Bernhardt is only 16 years old, major league baseball teams had competed to sign him up. In mid-January he agreed to join the Blue Jays organization.

"He's the best I've ever seen at his age," says Herb Raybourn, the Jay's director of Latin American scouting. "He's got a good work ethic and he's a smart kid."

Bernhardt, who plays shortstop, may have only average speed but has excellent vision. He can also hit a ball flying at 150 km/h. Bernhardt's bonus dwarfs the $30,000 to $50,000 bonuses usually paid to players in the Dominican Republic. He comments, "My family won't let me touch the money until I'm 20. I think that's good."